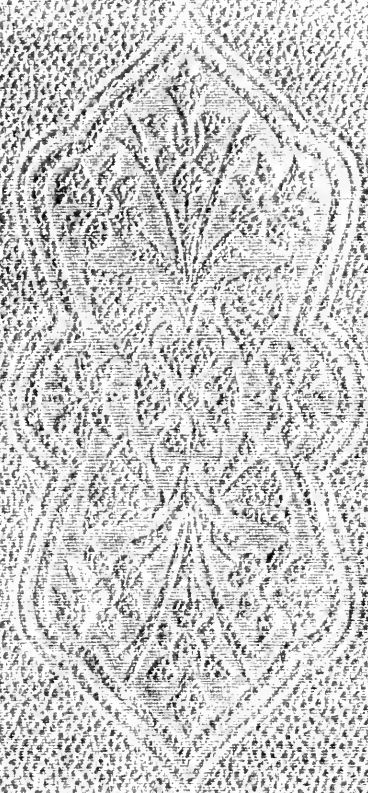


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THE LAST DECADE
OF
A GLORIOUS REIGN.
VOL. II.



THE LAST DECADE
OF
A GLORIOUS REIGN.

PART III.

OF
THE HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF HENRY IV.
KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE.

FROM NUMEROUS UNPUBLISHED SOURCES.
INCLUDING MS. DOCUMENTS IN THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE IMPÉRIALE.
AND THE ARCHIVES DU ROYAUME DE FRANCE, ETC.

BY
MARTHA WALKER FREER,

AUTHOR OF
“THE LIFE OF MARGUERITE D’ANGOULEME,” “JEANNE D’ALBRET,”
“ELIZABETH DE VALOIS AND THE COURT OF PHILIP II.”
“HENRY III., KING OF FRANCE,” ETC.

“A cœur vaillant rien d’impossible.”—LEGENDE DE HENRI IV.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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QUEEN MARGUERITE during the progress made by Henry and Marie, established herself in Paris, at her hôtel de Sens. Her first occupation, or rather recreation, after taking up her abode there, was to visit in succession all the conventual establishments of the capital. On the occasion of her visit to the great Dominican Monastery, Rue St. Jacques, the queen's attention was attracted by the gestures of a poor woman, who, having suddenly been taken in labour, had been placed for temporary refuge beneath the spacious portico of the monastery. Marguerite, when informed that the woman was Irish, and that she had given birth to a son, commanded

that the child should be carried into the convent chapel to be baptised. The queen then intimated that she would be the godmother; and calling the duke de Montpensier, her majesty requested him to become her colleague, and to permit the child to be named Henry, in honour of the glorious majesty of France, and of himself; "which was accordingly done, to the great applause of the people around." In the nunneries Marguerite soon became more popular with the ladies than their liege mistress, queen Marie. The latter on very rare occasions visited the convents of the capital; but Marguerite constantly repaired thither, to work lace and adornments for the altars with the nuns, in which crafts she was an adept. Marguerite also visited St. Denis, to inspect the progress of the repairs making by royal command, of the tombs in the Abbey-church; but more especially was she interested in the restorations of the superb mausoleum of Valois. These pious progresses, however, were undertaken, it must be feared, to give greater zest to the revels which were holden at the queen's hotel three times a week—music, dancing, recitations in French, and the Greek and Latin tongues; plays in which the costumes were selected by the exquisite taste of the royal hostess, were the diversions most in favour; and were brought to a termination about dawn, by a banquet of sumptuous excellence. All

the wit and beauty of Paris, courtly as well as plebeian, assembled at these *réunions*. Madame de Verneuil was a frequent guest; and the queen does not appear to have resented the favour accorded by Marguerite to Henriette; nor to have punished it by exclusion from the private festivities of the Louvre. The people of Paris, though they cheered the last daughter of their Valois kings, were nevertheless scandalized by many of her proceedings. An occasion for the exercise of public forbearance soon occurred; and the event happened during the sojourn of their majesties at La Casine. Amongst the persons of Marguerite's household, a young cavalier of the name of St. Julien, had been promoted to the place in the regard of his royal mistress once occupied by Vermont, the son of M. and Madame de Vermont, who had faithfully adhered to the fortunes of the queen during her long period of adversity at Usson. The privileges which outwardly distinguished the cavalier highest in favour with Marguerite, was to ride by her coach, to hand her therefrom, and to present her daily with a love epistle, a sentiment in verse, and a bouquet at her toilet. For the time of his favour, the other pages and chamberlains were subordinate; and the cavalier entered the presence of his royal mistress at will. The literary imposition on the devotion of her cavalier was lightened by the assistance of the

poet Mignard, who was attached to the household, that his ready pen might immortalize in verse the adventures and preferences of his patroness. The anger of M. de Vermont was excessive at finding himself supplanted in the good graces of Marguerite, and deprived of the lucrative privileges so long his own. One day, therefore the 5th of April, as the queen was returning from hearing mass at the Celestine monastery accompanied by St. Julien, with whom she was conversing at the window of her coach, Vermont shot his rival dead with a pistol as he was in the act of assisting his royal mistress to alight. The assassin instantly fled. The screams of the queen, whose hood and mantle were besprinkled with the blood of the unfortunate man; and the tumult which prevailed soon brought a strong guard of archers to the scene of the murder. Pursuit was made after the assassin, who was arrested, being badly wounded, outside the Porte St Denis. Vermont was at once brought back to the scene of his crime, where the body of the unfortunate cavalier still lay. Close to the body of St. Julien, weeping, and in her distraction uttering threats of vengeance, stood the queen. As she beheld the approach of the prisoner, Marguerite exclaimed, addressing the archers, "Let that wicked wretch be put to immediate death:—hang him, or strangle him without delay. Here, I will lend you my garters for the

purpose! Let him die!" Henry, however, had established orderly justice in his good city; and the archers knew better than to obey a command so frantic. Vermont, at the sight of the queen, recovered his *sang-froid*, and affecting a stoical disregard of life, he approached his fallen rival, and savagely exclaimed, "Is he dead? Oh! the joyful riddance. He presumed to supplant me; and if he still lived, I would repeat the deed!"¹ The prisoner was then conveyed to the Châtelet; while Marguerite, distracted and furious, retired to write a detail of the crime to the king; and to demand the immediate execution of the criminal. Until she obtained this boon, Marguerite vowed to abstain from meat or drink, excepting the smallest quantity of food capable of sustaining life. M. de Fourquevanx was despatched with this epistle; his orders were to see the king, to express queen Marguerite's indignation at so gross an outrage, and to return with his majesty's answer. Henry ordered that every satisfaction should be given to the queen, his sister; and that the culprit should suffer death, if no extenuating circumstances were pleaded on his behalf, before the hôtel de Sens, the spot where the assassination was perpetrated. The queen, meanwhile, actuated by one of the sudden and extraordinary impulses which distinguished her career, quitted the hôtel de Sens, a few hours after the commission of the crime; and

¹ Journal de Henri IV.

never more could be persuaded to set her foot in a palace which had been splendidly decorated for her reception, at the cost of the crown. She retired to a house in the Rue de Seine, Faubourg St. Germain, which eventually became, under the superintendence of Marguerite, one of the most superb residences of Paris. The assassin, meanwhile, was condemned to death, and executed two days after the perpetration of the murder. He refused to ask pardon from the queen; and maintained that his crime was a transport, "which he desired to dedicate to her charms;" and that he died, as M. d'Aubiac had done before, a victim to his passion for the fascinations of the most peerless princess of France. He refused to avow his crime, or to make *amende honorable* torch in hand, while proceeding to the scaffold. "I am willing to die, as my enemy no longer lives. Adieu, my queen, my friends!" were the last words spoken by Vermont.¹ On stripping the body after execution, three magical symbols were discovered:—one to insure long life; the second to preserve the love of his mistress; the third to give riches. Marguerite persecuted the family of the criminal with acrimony. His brother was dismissed her service, and banished from the capital; and his mother, whom Marguerite accused of having suggested the crime, was conducted with her daughters by archers, to the small Cistercian abbey of Selvânez, in Rouerge; which she was forbidden to quit, under

¹ Journal de Henri IV.—Etoile, Avril, 1606.

pain of incarceration in the Bastille. The old duchesse d'Angoulême Diane de France, who was universally revered, petitioned his majesty to obtain a mitigation of this sentence. Marguerite, however, writes letter upon letter to the king, imploring him to suffer the original sentence to be executed; and stating that she deemed her own life in peril from the animosity of the mother of Vermont, and accusing the latter of being a secret partisan of the count d'Auvergne. "Monseigneur, this bad woman bears my nephew Charles-Monsieur great affection; which makes me dread lest this my said nephew should use the malicious resentments of this woman and her children to attempt my life, and so end the suit; which is another reason wherefore I supplicate your majesty to maintain her exile."¹ Verses during these proceedings were circulated throughout Paris, ridiculing the adventure; and making coarse allusions to the age of the queen, and to the variety and number of her adorers. A poem intitulated "Regrets d'une grande dame sur la mort de son serviteur;" to which the name of Mignard was attached, emanated in reality, it is said, from the pen of Marguerite. The lines are weak and lachrymose. St. Julien is apostrophized under the name of Atys; and altogether the composition offered a fair provocation for the injurious diatribe

¹ Au Roy mon Seigneur et Frère. MS. Dupuy, t. 217, 106.—Also *Lettres de Marguerite de Valois*, Guessard.

in verse against queen Marguerite, which shortly appeared, commencing with the verse—

La reine Venus, demi morte
De voir mourir devant sa porte
Son Adonis, son cher Amour
Pour vengeance a, devant sa face,
Fait desfaire en la même place,
L'assassin presque au même jour!

This affair gave rise to another *brouillerie*, which luckily, however, had not so tragical a finale. Henri and Marie despatched the gay and gallant Bassompierre from Sedan to condole with the queen on the loss of her favourite chamberlain; and to pray her majesty to moderate the transports of her grief now that justice was performed, and the guilt of the criminal expiated by death. Henry also entrusted two sealed letters to Bassompierre, one addressed to Madame de Verneuil, the other to the countess de Moret, both of which he commanded the former to deliver in person. Bassompierre was one of the most brilliant and admired cavaliers of the court; and continued to make as imposing a parade of grandeur as any chief noble, though possessing revenues of only about one-third in amount of those of his associates. He owed his position at the court of France to the former favour of Gabrielle d'Estrées, and to his skill at the gambling-table. The in-

trigue subsisting between Bassompierre and Marie de Balzac sister of la Marquise, had long been notorious, though few ascribed honourable intentions to a cavalier so noted for inconstancy. As Mademoiselle de Balzac at this period resided with her sister, Bassompierre repaired, in the first instance, to the Rue de Tournon; after presenting Madame de Verneuil with the royal missive, he mentioned, accidentally, that he had a second billet to deliver to Madame de Moret. Henriette demanded to see the address of the letter; which Bassompierre relinquished into her hand, at the request of Mademoiselle de Balzac. Madame de Verneuil, with her accustomed unscrupulous daring, broke the seal, to the dismay of Bassompierre, and perused the billet, returning it contemptuously afterwards to Bassompierre, with the advice, that he should get a seal engraved with the royal cypher, and therewith seal again the letter, when no discovery of its perusal could transpire. Bassompierre agreed that such seemed to be the only available remedy. The following morning, therefore, with a want of caution astonishing in a cavalier so remarkable for tact, he sent his valet to an engraver with the letter, that an impression of the broken seal might be taken. Whether by design, or accident, Bassompierre's envoy applied to the court jeweller Turpin, who had cut the original seal for the king. Apprehending some sinister design in the proposal of this unknown person, "*de contrefaire le cachet de sa majesté,*"

Turpin, with landable caution, after first gaining possession of the letter addressed to Madame de Moret, collared his applicant. A scuffle ensued, which ended in the escape of Bassompierre's servant, who returned breathless and pallid to relate his adventure. The matter now assumed a serious aspect; for the king was likely to resent the betrayal of the confidence which he had placed in Bassompierre. The latter, now thoroughly on the alert, proceeded to call upon the countess de Moret. He acknowledged that he had been intrusted with a letter addressed to her by his majesty; but, by some untoward accident, Bassompierre stated, that he had broken the seal of the royal letter, mistaking it for a billet sent to him by a lady. To obviate the consequences of this mistake, fearing to give her the impression that it was designedly done, Bassompierre confessed that he had sent to have the seal imitated; but Turpin, fancying that he detected treason in the proposal, had retained the letter, with the intention of returning it to the king. Madame de Moret laughed at the adventure, and, believing the story so artfully invented, sent her valet with a note to Turpin, requesting that the missive might be delivered to her messenger. Turpin replied, "that the letter was no longer in his possession, but in that of the president de Segnier, who was about to investigate who the person was, daring enough, first to have broken the seal of a royal letter, and then to propose the fabrication of a duplicate of the original

seal." It was now impossible to prevent the affair from being laid before the king: while Bassompierre, in despair, felt that if he valued his future favour, it was equally impossible to betray the indiscreet curiosity of Madame de Vernueil. After some cogitation, Bassompierre concluded that, as the violated letter was a love epistle addressed by the king to Madame de Moret, the matter would not be laid before the privy-council; but that it would be privately communicated to de Loménie, in order to inform the king, and take the royal commands thereupon. M. de Loménie had an able wife, who loved politics, and who, having the pen of a ready writer, usually communicated such private matters to her husband when the latter was absent from Paris in attendance on the king. Bassompierre, therefore, felt convinced that Seguier would first inform Madame de Loménie of the circumstances, that she might ascertain to whom the missive had been intrusted. To the boudoir of Madame de Loménie, Bassompierre therefore repaired: he found the lady seated in deep abstraction before her writing-table, so absorbed, that on the entrance of her visitor, she begged him to take a chair and keep silence until she had finished a very important letter which she was despatching by express to her husband. Bassompierre boldly asked, "if any important affair had been discovered?" "Yes," replied Madame de Loménie, "some person has been trying to procure duplicates of the king's privy-seal. I am sending his

majesty's letter, which has been detained ; and we shall soon know who the individual is, guilty of this heinous design. Indeed, I would now give 2,000 crowns to ascertain his name !" Bassompierre, with matchless duplicity, then made the same confession as he had tendered to Madame de Moret : his statement was again believed, and the royal letter restored : while Madame de Loménie, wishing to befriend so gallant a cavalier, added a postscript to her letter explaining the matter, which she hoped might exonerate Bassompierre. Madame de Loménie, however, stipulated that Bassompierre himself should carry the despatch on the following day, so as to be ready to answer any report transmitted by Seguier,¹ and such interrogatories it might please his majesty to institute. This he accordingly did, carrying with him letters from queen Marguerite and Mesdames de Verneuil and de Moret. The good-natured king laughed heartily at Bassompierre's tribulation ; and was content to accept the version he tendered of the transaction. Marie, however, ascribed the blame where it was due ; and declaimed against the insolence of the favourite.

Bassompierre found the king at Villers Coterets, from whence his majesty travelled to Paris, to make his triumphal entry into his capital, on the 28th day of the month. The ceremonial to be observed on the entry occasioned

¹ Journal de ma Vie—Bassompierre.

a lively discussion between Sully and his royal master. Henry sent a message to the Arsenal, desiring that his presence should be greeted by a general discharge of all the artillery of the capital. The duke observed that the royal entry ought to be a pacific manifestation; that no military glory had been achieved by the campaign; besides, as the duke de Bouillon had announced his intention to be present in the cavalcade, his susceptibilities might again be wounded. Sully's remonstrances provoked a peremptory command; in consequence of which, his majesty was saluted with such repeated and tremendous volleys of artillery, as at once to regale and satisfy his martial ardour.¹ Bouillon rode before the king, simply clad, but with a deportment withal so arrogant, "that the spectators," writes M. de Bassompierre,² "might have doubted whether he was not leading the king in triumph." Another account nevertheless affords us the information, that Bouillon wore an aspect "cold, indifferent, but subdued." The king as he passed through the streets was saluted by madame de Moret from the balcony of her hôtel; and by the countess d'Auvergne, who gazed sadly at the procession from a loophole of the Bastille.³ The chieftain of Montmorency and

¹ *Mém. de Sully*, liv. 23^{ème}. *Journal de Henri IV.*, année 1606, Avril 28. Marsolier—*Vie du duc de Bouillon*.

² *Journal de ma Vie*.

³ *Journal de Henri IV.* Sauval—*Galanteries des Rois de France*.

his family were, at this period, under eclipse. The suit of queen Marguerite was likely to deprive his son-in-law d'Auvergne of the vast possessions bequeathed by Catherine de Medici; while his own matrimonial misconduct had entailed the censures of Rome, and the displeasure of his royal mistress, queen Marie. The late duchess de Montmorency had a fair young aunt, several years her junior, and the half-sister of her mother. Laurence de Clermont¹ was of gentle disposition and pious, and would have declined the addresses of the constable, had she been permitted so to act by her relatives. It appears that Montmorency presumed at first to offer unlawful proposals to the lady, on the plea that their marriage was impossible on account of her kinship to his deceased wife. These addresses met with indignant rejection; and the fair young Laurence was about to seek the shelter of the veil, when, yielding to the command of her brothers, she consented to a private marriage with M. de Montmorency, which was solemnized in the chapel of the castle of Clermont. The reason assigned for this secrecy was, that the Holy See would refuse dispensation; and that the remnant of the life of M. de Montmorency might be spent in harassing appeals; whereas, the marriage once solemnized, difficulties vanished, and the king himself would demand the legalization of the marriage of the highest officer of his crown. The marriage

¹ Laurence de Clermont, daughter of Claude de Clermont, count de Montoison.

was consequently celebrated in the autumn of 1599: and the constable, who was deeply enamoured of his bride, presented a petition to the Holy See, through d'Ossat, for dispensation. The answer to this petition reached France in the year 1601—so many were the delays, arguments, and procrastinations which ensued. His holiness absolved the petitioner from the sin of incest, and granted dispensation, provided that the marriage was celebrated again.¹ This stipulation roused evil suggestions in the mind of the constable, who now repented his hasty union with a lady his inferior by birth, and within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity. He therefore pretended sudden and grave compunction of conscience; separated from his young wife; and selected for his confessor one of the most rigid priests of the capital. In the presence of this individual, Montmorency made written confession of his penitence for “*les egarements de passion*,” into which he had been betrayed; adding, that his conscience was so pricked, that if the choice remained with him, he would refrain from perfecting an alliance unholy in its origin, and miserable in its results. The declaration was prepared for presentation to Clement VIII., when madame de Montmorency and her kindred gained intelligence of the proceeding. Laurence presented petitions to their majesties, who at once assured the duchess of their protection; the queen especially

¹ Lettres du cardinal d'Ossat.

made so great demonstration of anger, as to refuse to receive the constable at her private assemblies. The royal protection rendered the petition and compunction of M. de Montmorency of no avail. Clement declared the marriage valid and indissoluble; though it was requisite, as a mark of respect and gratitude to the Holy See, that the ceremony should be repeated, and sanctioned by the public reading of the papal dispensation. Montmorency was, therefore, compelled to submit; but he solaced his anger and chagrin by the exile and imprisonment of his young wife in the lonely fortress of Château de Villiers le Bel, where the duchess resided, until the death, in 1614, of her persecutor.¹

The preparations for the solemnization of the baptism of the three children of France was the all-absorbing topic of the Parisian people during the summer and autumn months of 1606. Orders were issued for the erection of platforms and lists, as Henry designed to hold a tourney on the occasion. In the month of August, however, the plague committed such ravages in Paris, that it was deemed dangerous to permit the influx of

¹ Le Laboureur.—Additions aux Memoires de Castelnau, t. 2. Vie de Henri, duc et connétable de Montmorency. After the death of her husband, the duchess de Montmorency appeared at court, and was appointed mistress of the robes to queen Anne of Austria on the marriage of this princess with Louis XIII. She died September 14th, 1644, at the age of 83 years, revered and beloved for her gentle temper and benevolence.

so many personages: the ceremony was therefore transferred to Fontainebleau, to the infinite mortification of the citizens. One author insinuates that the "true plague" was the thrifty compunctions which assailed the heart of Henry and his minister, on revising the estimates for the popular shows proposed; which costs were avoided by celebrating the baptism at Fontainebleau. Henry likewise experienced much vexation from the obstacles opposed to the acceptance of the office of sponsors to his children by the royal individuals whom he had honoured by the request. In the case of the dauphin, the grand-duke of Tuscany declined the office, on the plea that canon law forbade a child to have two godfathers; but, in reality, because he desired to offer an unworthy concession to Spain.¹ It had therefore been decided that the Pope and the duchess of Mantua, sister of the queen, should alone be nominated. Clement VIII. was dead; but the newly elected Pope through his legate made known his intention to fulfil the engagement of his predecessor. The king of England was then asked to stand sponsor to Madame Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Henry and Marie. James sent an ungracious refusal, on the plea, that he could not accept the office, as he ought to have been preferred before the pope as godfather to the dauphin; moreover, that the infantadona Isabel archduchess of the Low Coun-

¹ Hist. del Granducato, lib. 5.

tries, not being a crowned head, he could not accept her for his colleague, as the king proposed. Such unreasonable excuses caused the king to reflect; when it occurred to his majesty, that it was possible queen Anne had persuaded her consort to decline the proffered honour, as she had not been requested to perform the office of sponsor, instead of the archduchess infantina. The king, therefore, decided that this omission should be rectified; and that her Britannic majesty should be solicited to accept Madame for her god-child. By Villeroy this proposal was imparted to d'Ossat, just before the lamented demise of the cardinal. In horror and consternation, he penned a despatch entreating that so heinous a project might not be accomplished; although he acknowledged that the heretic princess in question might be propitiated thereby, and induced to show favour to Gallic interests. In the diplomatic correspondence of the day Anne of Denmark is alluded to as a person supposed to exercise unlimited power over her royal consort and his council. Her majesty, therefore, is laden with much unmerited abuse by the anti-Spanish party, whose cause she was accused of betraying, although a Roman Catholic at heart. Henry in more than one despatch alludes to the English queen, as a princess "cunning and spiteful," not to be propitiated by gifts; but apt in the guidance of the crooked wit of her erudite spouse. In Rome it was reported that the English lords used often

facetiously to allude to "their late king Elizabeth and to their present queen James."¹ "Notwithstanding the hints that we receive of the good-will shown by the queen of England for the faith," writes cardinal d'Ossat, "she cannot be holden to be a Catholic princess. Therefore, if at the baptism of monseigneur le dauphin, whom the Pope and the duchess of Mantua are to present, that of Madame is also celebrated with the queen of England as godmother, you would unite the said queen and the Pope in the same religious ceremony—so that his holiness must participate *in divinis* with a heretic!—a thing which the Pope would esteem a gross affront, and an atrocious injury. The legate, therefore, will not be present at the ceremony, if such arrangement previously transpires; or if he is surprised when present by the announcement, he will withdraw. Be assured that such design will be a scandal in Christendom, and a source of great displeasure to his holiness."² The controversy terminated by a promise, on the part of the king, that the archduchess infanta should present the princess at the font, and act as sole sponsor. Henry wrote to his ambassador in London, M. de la

¹ This epigram was circulated in France at this period:

"Tandis qu' Elizabeth fut roy,
L'Anglois fut d'Espagne l'effroy,
Maintenant, devise et caquette,
Regi par la reine Jaquette."

Rapin, Hist. of England, vol. 2.

² Lettres d'Ossat—lettre 362, t. 5.

Boderie, and made the following comments on the unfriendly refusal which he had received from king James. "As to the difficulties alleged by the king and his council against accepting the summons which I sent him touching my daughter's baptism, as they seem to be only founded on the punctilio you relate, I am willing to take them in good part—preferring the satisfaction of the said king to my own. For as I selected the said king to testify my esteem and honour for his person, I refrain from insisting; as he deems such office inconsistent with his dignity, as was declared to you by the earl of Salisbury. I cannot change the order of the said baptisms; neither can I give my daughter precedence before my son; nor can I revoke my word to the Pope, which I had given to his predecessor, at the period of the birth of my said son."¹ The arrangements relative to the new-born princess were not of so annoying a character. The grand-duchess of Tuscany Christine, accepted the honour, and nominated as her proxy on the occasion don Giovanni de Medici. The queen, however, thought proper to show discontent at the honour conferred on her uncle, whom she affected to treat as an illegitimate scion of Medici; and whose departure back to his own country she never ceased to urge. The duke of Lorraine gladly responded to the royal summons; and pro-

¹ *Ambassades de M. de la Boderie en Angleterre*, t. 1, p. 164. Also *Lettres Missives*, t. 6.

mised to visit the court and discharge in person the office of sponsor to Madame Christine.

The plague continued to rage in Paris. The malady broke out in the hôtel of queen Marguerite, carrying off three of her servants. Marguerite, therefore, removed from the capital to a picturesque house at Issy, belonging to M. de la Haye; not, however, from personal fear of the infection, but because the deaths in her household occasioned such panic that the majority of her servants demanded *congé*. Before her departure Marguerite had the triumph of beholding the successful termination of her suit against Charles de Valois, count d'Auvergne. The High Court decreed (17th June 1606), that Charles-Monsieur should be evicted from possession of the said domains, duchies, and royalties;¹ and that queen Marguerite should enter into immediate and entire enjoyment of the said possessions. The queen's cause was ably promoted by Louis Servin the attorney-general, whose oration decided the spoliation of M. d'Auvergne; who, but for his rebellion, would have been suffered to retain the wealth bequeathed to him. The will of Catherine de Medici was disputed, as unjust to her only surviving daughter; and contrary to the stipulations of her marriage contract with Henry II. It was,

¹ These domains included immense estates in Auvergne, and the county of Laraguais. Servin was the queen's advocate.

therefore, successfully alleged, that the queen made her will when no longer competent to execute such document from disease and infirmity. The news of her success was brought to Marguerite by her chancellor Le Dreux, while she was hearing mass in the church of St. Severin. Her transport was so great that she rose, and, repairing to the great Franciscan monastery, caused a *Te Deum* to be chanted.¹ The queen settled her recovered possessions, according to her promise, on the dauphin, reserving only her revenues for life. Ultimately, in consideration of a large pension from the crown, she executed a deed of entire cession of her domains in Auvergne, Agenois, Navarre, and elsewhere.

An accident happened to the royal pair about this period, which was near being attended with fatal results. The king and queen, accompanied by the little duke de Vendôme, the princess de Conty, and the duke de Montpensier, were returning from St. Germain to the Louvre on the evening of Friday, June 9th, in a coach drawn by eight horses. In attendance were several gentlemen of the chamber on horseback. The ponderous vehicle had to be ferried over the river at Neuilly. The rain was descending in torrents, so that none of the personages inside the coach alighted. In dragging the coach on to the raft or boat on which it was to be conveyed across, the

¹ Journal de Henri IV., Mai, 1606. De Thou, liv. 136, p. 551, edit. de Londres.

leaders became restive, and, slipping, dashed into the river, dragging the coach after them which capsized in deep water. La Châteneraye, and other gentlemen, instantly threw themselves into the river to assist, and save their majesties. Henry, who was a good swimmer, extricated himself; and helped in the rescue of the queen and the young duke de Vendôme. Marie, nevertheless, owed her life to the gallant exertions of la Châteneraye, who, perceiving that her majesty was insensible, and in imminent peril from the plunging of the drowning horses, dragged her from under the coach by her hair, and supported her to the bank of the river. The king caught his son by the cloak, as the boy was sinking for the third time, and landed him alive. Madame de Conty, meanwhile, having fallen where the water was shallow, managed to escape by the aid of M. de Montpensier, but fainted on reaching the bank. Meantime, the condition of the queen, who had remained under water for several seconds, excited much solicitude. Marie at length revived; her first question was to ask for the king, and to convince herself that he was safe and uninjured. Henry, purposely assuming a tone of *badinage*, declared, “that the immersion, instead of evil, had conferred upon him inestimable good; for that he was before suffering from a furious toothache, which was now cured!”¹ This narrow escape,

¹ Vie de Marie de Medici—Dreux du Radier. Tallemant

however, made a deep impression on the minds of their majesties; who commanded a thanksgiving service to be celebrated in the private chapel of the Louvre. When Marie recovered from the indisposition brought on by her fright and immersion, she honoured la Châteneraye with a private audience, when her majesty presented him with a jewelled star worth 4,000 crowns; and a paper which conferred an ample pension for life. Ultimately the queen, who piqued herself on never forgetting a service, nominated la Châteneraye as captain of her body-guard,—a trust which, she graciously added, that he had nobly won. Great sensation was excited in Paris by this adventure. Madame de Verneuil, however, laughed, and denied that any especial danger had befallen the queen. “If I had been of the party,” exclaimed the audacious Henriette, “I should only have cried out *la Reine boit!*” This comment soon found its way to the Louvre, and rendered the queen resolute in her demand, that Madame de Verneuil should be ordered never to approach within ten miles of any spot in which the court sojourned. Sully showed his sympathy for the danger incurred by their majesties, by ordering the immediate erection of a bridge; and the Pont de Neuilly, after some interval, spanned the passage where the accident occurred.

The matrimonial suit of the duke de Bar, during des Réaux—Vie de Henri IV. De Thou, Journal de Henri IV. Mercure François.

these transactions, had prospered under the protection of Marie de Medici. The duchess of Mantua, therefore, visited France, for the double object of conducting her daughter to Nancy; and to attend the baptism of M. le Dauphin. The duchess travelled with very sumptuous equipage, attended by a suite of 250 persons, and an escort of 200 horse. The bride elect, Marguerite de Gonzague, was very young, and very orthodox in her faith; M. de Bar, therefore, believed that at length matrimonial felicity had fallen to his lot. Henry sent Bassompierre as ambassador extraordinary to be present at the nuptial festivities, which were performed on a scale of great splendour at Nancy. Bassompierre was likewise commissioned, officially, to invite the duchess to visit France; also to ask M. de Lorraine to be godfather to Madame Christine.

Much discussion arose as to the rank to be conceded to Madame de Mantoue during her sojourn at the court of France. The queen insisted that her sister should take precedence before the princesses of the blood as a reigning sovereign, and the guest of the king. M. de Soissons, as usual, was foremost amongst the cavillers at this pretension; which, nevertheless, Henry declared to be well founded, as the elder sister of a queen of France ought to yield precedence only to a crowned head in the palaces of France. Madame de Mantoue arrived about the 20th of July, and joined their majesties at Villers Cotteret, where she was

received with transport by her sister. The duchess was accompanied by her son Don Ferdinando ; but her suite was very limited, at the king's desire. The coach in which she travelled seems to have been a marvellous edifice of gold, embroidery, and paintings ; and attracted universal curiosity. Sums of incredible amount, meanwhile, were squandered by the nobles, in preparations for the approaching ceremonial, which was the most brilliant festivity given by Henri Quatre. The hilt of the sword worn by the duke d'Epemon was studded with 1,000 diamonds, and cost 30,000 crowns ; while the habit of M. de Bassompierre cost 14,000 crowns, and was embroidered, as he himself informs us, with fifty pounds weight of seed pearls. The ground of this marvellous coat was violet, woven with gold thread, diapered with a pattern of palms. Bassompierre acknowledges that when he gave the order for this habit, he had only 700 crowns in his purse, having expended large sums on his equipment for the wedding festivities of M. and Madame de Bar. He, however, placed full reliance on his luck at the gambling-table ; nor was he disappointed—for the same night Bassompierre won 5,000 crowns at the hôtel d'Epemon ; and in the space of a month gained sums large enough to acquit his debt to the tailor and embroiderer, and to purchase, besides, a diamond-hilted sword, to complete his costume. The dress of the queen was likewise lavishly adorned :—it was composed of cloth of gold, beset

with 32,000 precious stones and 3,000 diamonds! The weight of a robe so resplendent was intolerable; and on the day of the ceremony, Marie found the burden too oppressive, and was compelled to forego her splendour.¹ Meantime, no apartment at Fontainebleau was spacious enough to hold the illustrious company invited to be present at the baptism; still less to receive the spectators who were expected from all parts of France to view the pageant. Sully, therefore, proposed that the ceremony should be performed in the Cour du Donjon, which he designed to adorn with draperies. In the middle of the Cour a platform was erected forty feet square, surmounted by a lofty canopy, upon which the rite was to be performed. Henry abandoned all arrangements to the skill and contrivance of Sully; and, during the interval, amused himself in showing the duchess of Mantua his capital and palaces. She visited Monceaux and St. Germain, and Vincennes the abode of the duchess d'Angoulême. "I should have taken my sister of Mantua to see Chantilly, had you been there," wrote Henry to the constable;² "for, although your house is a very fine one, yet it is your presence which constitutes its most precious ornament." The young prince of Mantua appears to have paid the penalty of

¹ Hilarion de Coste, *Eloges des Enfants de France*. *Eloge de Louis, XVII Dauphin*.

² *Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth.* 9090, MS. *Lettres Missives*, t. 6.

the discontent excited by the precedence accorded to his mother; and seems to have been altogether slighted by Henry and his courtiers. The queen, it was observed, kept her nephew standing for intolerable periods; and, on two occasions, after accepting his services at supper, she detained the poor prince in conversation during the ballet, in cruel disregard of his famishing condition. The court of France was not a place of pleasant sojourn for the heirs, or even for princes in the enjoyment of the thrones of small principalities. The arrogance of the French nobility clashed with their pretensions; they were grudged precedence, and overpowered by the splendour surrounding them. Even the duke of Savoy had found his rights and precedence assailed; and never more repeated his visit to his good brother of France.

Henry and his queen, with their illustrious guests, arrived at Fontainebleau¹ during the first week in September. His majesty inspected with interest the elaborate preparations for the approaching ceremony. The 14th of September the festival of the Exaltation of Holy Cross was the day fixed for its performance. Fontainebleau and its vicinity was thronged with visitors, even from remote parts of France: most large towns sent deputies, as did also the Parlia-

¹ Marguerite de Valois, in alluding to this palace, terms it "un paradis terrestre, un beau jardin de volupté."

ments of the realm. The ceremony was deemed national; and intense were the regrets expressed that the condition of the capital prevented the celebration of the rite in the Church of Notre Dame. A gallery hung with crimson velvet connected Sully's platform of state in the Cour du Donjon with the Cour du Cheval Blanc, into which the apartments of the dauphin and his sisters opened; this gallery again extended on to the apartments of their majesties in the Cour de la Fontaine. In the centre of the great platform, rose a second elevated theatre, upon which stood a richly decorated altar and font under a canopy of cloth of silver. On each side of this altar were stalls for choristers; and benches, splendidly draped, for the prelates summoned to attend the ceremony. Three superb apartments communicating were also prepared within the palace. In each was a state bed twelve feet square; upon these beds the dauphin and his sisters were laid ready to be conducted to the font by their respective sponsors and attendants. Three steps covered with brocade gave easy ascent to these edifices, the pillows of which were of cloth of gold fringed; and the counterpane of the same fabric, bordered with a deep band of ermine. In each room were two tables, upon which were deposited the vessels and cushions to be used at the baptism. The procession of Madame Christine first defiled: the baby-princess lay on her sumptuous bed, attended by the countesses

de Guiche and de Sault, the *maréchale de Laverdin*, the *marquise de Montlor*, and the countess de Rendan. Each of these ladies had separate functions. The first two turned down the sheets when the sponsors approached; Madame de Laverdin raised the princess; the countess de Rendan attired her in her baptismal robes; while Madame de Montlor presented the baptismal vessels to the noblemen who were to bear them to the font. First marched gentlemen of the chamber, drums, trumpets, and kettle-drums. Following, came the knights of St. Esprit, wearing their collars and mantles, preceding the procession of the sponsors. The duke de Lorraine, and Don Giovanni proxy for the grand-duchess of Tuscany, marched attended by their respective suites. The infant princess was borne in the arms of the Marshal de Boisdaphin, the train of her baptismal mantle being carried by Madame de Chemerault. Six noblemen, bearing the holy vessels, surrounded the princess; and the procession ended with the ladies who had served in the chamber. The procession escorting Madame to the font next defiled. The princess was a fair and intelligent child of four, and looked around her, it is recorded, with great amazement. The ladies serving around the couch of state were the duchess de Guise, Mademoiselle de Mayenne, Mademoiselle de Vendôme, the duchess de Rohan.

and the duchess de Sully, who presented the vessels to the noblemen to bear in procession. The ewer was carried by the Marshal de Laverdin; the basin by the Marshal de la Châstre; the cushion by the duke de Sully; the torch by the duke de Montbazon; the chrism by the duke d'Epemon; and the salt by the duke d'Aiguillon. The prince de Joinville carried Madame, whose train was borne by mademoiselle de Rohan. The duchess d'Angoulême Diane de France, as proxy for the infanta archduchess Dona Isabel, followed, her train borne by the "incomparable Charlotte Marguerite de Montmorency," youngest daughter of the constable; whose charms on this great occasion first beamed publicly on the court. The *cortège* of the dauphin followed; the little Louis had accomplished his fifth year, and was said to understand perfectly the meaning of the rite about to be administered. He was served in his chamber by the princess de Conty, the countess of Soissons, the princess de Condé, the duchess de Montpensier, and mademoiselle de Bourbon Condé, all princesses of the blood. The princes who carried "les honneurs" were the prince de Vandement, the chevalier de Vendôme, the duke de Vendôme, the duke de Montpensier, and M. de Soissons. It had been appointed that the prince de Conty should carry M. le dauphin; but as the child was heavy, and the health of the prince infirm, Souvré, governor of monseigneur, held him in his arms, M. de Conty taking him by the hand. The duke de Guise bore the train of the mantle of ermine;

while twenty chief noblemen marched around monseigneur, holding flambeaux of wax. The legate and representative of the Pope the cardinal de Joyeuse, followed, leading the duchess of Mantua. Next came the princesses of the blood, marching singly, each attended by a train-bearer and an equerry. The princess de Condé was attired in widow's weeds. Her robe, however, was embroidered with jet, which then was an ornament both novel and costly. All these great ladies wore enormous hoops, a fashion introduced again by queen Marguerite.¹ Marie and Henry surveyed the procession from a window, which opened on the gallery, before which it defiled. The cardinal bishop of Paris Gondy, performed the ceremony: the princesses respectively received the names of Elizabeth and Christine. The young dauphin stood before the cardinal, and answered promptly when required to repeat the *pater* and *credo*. He then received the name of Louis, "in memory of the holy king St. Louis, from whom our branch of Bourbon sprang." The ceremony terminated by great discharges of artillery; and the king stepping on the platform, tenderly embraced the dauphin and his sisters, shedding tears. His majesty then caused largesse to be proclaimed; which was responded

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp. Fontanieu, 550-1. De Coste, *Eloges des Dauphins de France*. Journal de Henri IV. De Thou. Dupleix. *Mercure François*, vol. 1. Godefroy *Grand Cérém de France*, t. 2. Hist. de l'Année 1600. Archives Curieuses, t. 14, 1 series.

to with acclamation by the numerous spectators. Henry then accepted the congratulations of his nobles. Some chief names, however, were missing from the throng; the owners being absent from disputes relative to precedence. The duke de Bouillon, in his character of a sovereign prince, had claimed precedence next to the royal family;—the duke de Nemours asked to go before the duke de Nevers; while the latter demanded higher honours than the duke de Guise. All these noblemen, however, excepting Bouillon, appeared at the evening festivities, not desiring to grieve their indulgent sovereign on so joyous an occasion. A sumptuous banquet was provided at four o'clock; and afterwards there was a ball. The king devoted his attentions to the duchess de Nevers, whose favour he had for some time anxiously sought. The royal heart was no longer constant to Madame de Verneuil, as before the arrest of that lady. The king visited and corresponded occasionally with Mesdames de Moret and des Essarts—he, however, acknowledged to Sully that he felt weary of repeating the same things to these ladies, whose minds never suggested variety or wit; in fact, he almost preferred a stormy interview with queen Marie, or an encounter with the *piquante* tongue of Henriette de Balzac. Madame de Nevers was the eldest daughter of the duke de Mayenne, late chief of the League. She was a stately dark-browed woman, serene in her deportment, and loving serious occupa-

tions. The homage of the king she at first accepted as a tribute due to the blood of Lorraine; but when she comprehended that his majesty mentally presumed to measure her character by that of Madame de Verneuil, her indignation was strong, even as the queen could desire. Her manner to the king in public was thenceforth profoundly distant; and she feigned not to comprehend the drift of the honeyed speeches addressed to her. She retired to Nevers, and declined to visit the capital, under the plea of indisposition. At the festivities at Fontainebleau, however, her rank compelled her to appear: but Madame de Nevers seldom gave the king an opportunity of meeting her in private; while she took her departure from Fontainebleau as soon as etiquette permitted. The princess de Conty was present, a witness of this conflict; and her pen has recorded some of its incidents, for the benefit of posterity. "The king," writes she,¹ "willing to moderate the violent wrath of his consort, refrained from visiting Madame de Verneuil frequently, as of yore. As his majesty was, therefore, in want of occupation, he began to pay court to Catherine de Lorraine, daughter of the duke de Mayenne, and who married M. de Nevers in the year 1600. She was a princess of great virtue, who honoured the king, but

¹ Hist. des Amours de Henri IV., par Louise Marguerite de Lorraine Guise.—Archives Curieuses, t. 14.

was utterly incapable of vouchsafing the smallest evil complaisance. The king availed himself of the baptism of the dauphin to draw her again to court; and as she was also first cousin to the duchess of Mantua, Madame de Nevers could not politely decline to assist at this ceremony. The king anxiously sought occasions to speak with her in private; but the duchess omitted no precaution likely to frustrate such design; though she could not always succeed, on account of the great respect it is necessary to evince towards a lover of such quality." The bright light which, in a few months, was to set the court aflame, and to kindle again the martial ardour inspired by the bold projects of Elizabeth queen of England, shone this evening on M. de Bassompierre. Mademoiselle de Montmorency had been consigned by the king to his courtly offices; Bassompierre led her to the banquet, and danced with her the first couranto, in which she publicly figured. He expressed himself entranced by her wondrous beauty and vivacity. The constable, her father, was visiting the south of France, in very ill-humour, trying to assuage a fierce attack of gout by drinking the mineral waters of Meynes in Languedoc. "The beauty of this young lady is admirable," says cardinal Bentivoglio; "her complexion is brilliant, and her eyes large and lively. The sound of her voice, her deportment, even her trivial actions, have inexpressible

grace. Nature has conferred upon her the rarest gifts; so that she need not have recourse to arts of embellishment, however innocent." Mademoiselle de Montmorency had been educated by her aunt, Madame d'Angoulême, who bore her great affection, and seems to have exercised much influence over her destiny. She lived in profound seclusion at Vincennes; and had rarely seen even the queen. The rumour of the beauty of the duchess's protégée, however, was bruited abroad; and her father received, before she was twelve years old, several proposals for her hand. Amongst other proposals, Madame de Sourdis, the aunt of Gabrielle d'Éstrees, offered Mademoiselle de Montmorency the hand of her son; who, although profligate like his mother, was esteemed a marvel of learned erudition. This prodigal was declined by Madame d'Angoulême, though tendered with the bribe to the avaricious constable, of taking his daughter without dowry. M. de Montmorency seems to have felt little affection for his daughter; and condescended only to interest himself in her fate, when every cavalier of the court was at her feet,—a treatment the more remarkable, as he manifested strong attachment for his elder daughters, the duchess de Ventadour, and the countess d'Auvergne. This comparative neglect of his youngest and most gifted child, renewed the rumours once afloat relative to the sudden demise of her mother; which, added to the persecution experienced by the duchess de Montmo-

rency, rendered the constable very unpopular at this period with his countrymen. The sports at Fontainebleau continued to be varied and merry. Sully commanded the erection of a mimic fort, well plenished with combustibles; the assault and blowing up of which afforded great diversion. The queen had a lottery, in which much valuable bijouterie was distributed, being the first introduction of this pastime at court. The frugal Henry, however, disapproved of so costly a sport, and prohibited its repetition. His majesty said, as the queen gave the jewels competed for, that "such pastimes rendered her majesty extravagant, and the fair courtiers covetous." The grim terrors of pestilence dispersed the court. Two apprentices of the royal apothecary sickened of the plague in the palace. The royal children were sent back to St. Germain, while their majesties journeyed leisurely thither; halting at the castles of the nobles, where the district was not infected. The duchess of Mantua and her son, therefore, took leave, and embarked at Marseilles, escorted by a fleet of royal galleys to Leghorn.

The foreign policy of Henri Quatre at this season was firm and liberal; and he was on more amicable terms with the potentates of Europe than at any subsequent period of his reign. The power of the heretic Sully, nevertheless, was no less distasteful to the allies of king Henry than to the majority of his majesty's ultra-orthodox subjects. With the king of England Henry continued on

friendly terms, and in the constant interchange of gifts and compliments. The eccentric crotchets of king James, and the capricious poutings of queen Anne, Henry invariably took in good part. In the political events of England, his sympathy was with the government; and he constantly declined to abet the incendiary schemes of Spain, and of the malcontents, whose treason was fostered by that power. After the discovery of the famous gunpowder conspiracy, Henry's congratulations were cordial. Henry, however, was keenly susceptible of the accusation aimed at the Jesuits, as the instigators of this atrocious plot. James, with many an erudite argument, had adjured his royal ally not to reinstate the order in France. Political expediency, nevertheless, accomplished the recall of the learned and subtle brotherhood; who, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, performed the functions of the monks of St. Dominic in the dark ages, as the instructors of youth; and whose seminaries, in their turn, possessed the finest libraries, and the most extensive privileges. So anxious was Henry to vindicate his judgment in this matter, that he despatched le Père Cotton to James, to assure his Britannic majesty that the order was not hostile; but that the arrested Jesuits, Garnet and Parsons, were politically disaffected subjects of his crown, who concealed their malevolence under the ecclesiastical habit. James, however, was not to be convinced by the fluent periods of the reverend father: he took

Henry's overture in good part; and after several learned encounters with Cotton in the presence of the court, he gave him honourable dismissal. The friendship of Henry, nevertheless, was sorely tried by the indecision of his royal ally. James at all times acknowledged that alliance with France and with the republic of Holland was the safest course for the honour and prosperity of his realm. He personally admired king Henry, and envied his vigorous and successful administration. "Mon frère," wrote Henry, "I listen to one personage, and the suggestions of my own capacity: you try to conciliate every member of your council; and for that reason content nobody." Henry was right in his deduction; there was, nevertheless, another actuating motive, which, perhaps, he never sufficiently comprehended—James, by inclination, was Spanish: his heart warmed towards the grandeur of the old monarchy; the wealth, the absolute power, and the state of the monarchs of Spain, had taken his imagination captive. Spain, moreover, had befriended his mother in her need; and had sent almost the most magnificent embassy recorded in her annals to welcome his own accession. Though shrewd enough to perceive that the dominance of Spanish policy over the cabinets of Europe was the decrease of his own *prestige*, James, while leaguings with Henri IV., craved the friendship of Philip III. Queen Anne, fascinated by

the splendid gifts transmitted for her acceptance, coquetted with the ambassadors Taxis and Velasco; who were secretly instructed to flatter the queen, to foster her supposed secret preference for the orthodox faith; and to propose the alliance of the prince of Wales with the Spanish infanta, to whom a fabulous dowry was to be given in honour of the alliance. Roused, perhaps, occasionally by some deed or manifesto more than usually aggressive, emanating from the cabinet of Madrid, James sent for la Boderie, Henry's ambassador, and renewed the discussion, on the scheme propounded by Sully, for the downfall of the power of the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs. The royal observations being duly transmitted to the Louvre by the ambassador, James took unreasonable offence if these his crude and precipitate proposals met not with applause from Henry and his sage minister. Thus, during the absence of Sully at Châtellerault, James transmitted a project through de Beaumont, on the return of the latter from his embassy in London, to secure the election of a king of the Romans according to ancient statute, prohibiting the nomination of any prince of the imperial blood of Hapsburg. He further proposed that the personage elected to this dignity should swear to renounce the crown of Bohemia on his assumption of the imperial diadem—"a cession which would diminish the influence of the empire; and destroy the hereditary succession

of the Hapsburg.”¹ A scheme fraught with results so important, although not opposed to the political views of Henry IV. required, even to render its discussion feasible, constancy, secrecy, and the closest alliance. With Elizabeth such details might have been discussed; but James’s policy was not to be depended upon as to its issue: the proposal, therefore, was respectfully received; but its consideration was adjourned to a future period.

In the Low Countries Spinola² maintained the renown of Spanish chivalry; but no progress had been made towards subduing the revolted provinces, which, sustained by the valour of Maurice, the aid of France, and the neutrality of England, defied the ire of the archdukes. The fall of Ostend, though glorious to the flag of Spain, was followed by no political results favourable to the restoration of the provinces to their ancient allegiance. On the seventh of October Rhinberg capitulated to Spinola; nevertheless, the wisdom of the archdukes already contemplated the pacification, which, after some months longer of warfare, closed the civil calamities of forty

¹ Sully, liv. 21ème. Siri—Mem. Recondite, t. 1, p. 166. The latter author states that the ambassador de Beaumont inspired the king with the idea which James proposed to the French council.

² Ambrose Spinola, Marquis of Venafro and de Los Balbazès, in 1621. Spinola espoused Mariana Bassadonna. He died September, 1630.

years' duration. Both parties were exhausted—"Prince Maurice," writes Henry IV., "does nothing now worthy of renown." The Spanish army was ill-disciplined, rebellious, and, though commanded by Spinola, was formed principally of young recruits. The duke de Lerma was sparing in his subsidies: the health of the infant and her husband faltered with toil and anxiety; while the people of the United Provinces were yet more independent and proud of their hardly-earned liberties. Isabel inherited sagacity from her grandfather, Charles V., and her grandmother, Catherine de Medici: she, therefore, with the concurrence of Philip III., had commenced overtures, a few months anterior to this period, to propitiate certain influential members of the States of Holland. Unhappily, concession so tardy met with success only after long preliminaries, many suspicions, and sanguinary contest.

The duke of Savoy, meantime, found himself too exhausted, by the costs of the campaign terminated by the treaty of Lyons, to commence fresh aggression. No subsidy from Spain helped to replenish his treasury: Philip III. maintained a convenient reserve; and apparently felt displeasure at the proceeding of the duke, in concert with Fuentes, during the recent war; which his majesty said, had tended to embarrass his government, as M. de Savoye made assertions and raised expectations which Spain had never

sanctioned. The duke was compelled humbly to submit to this treatment, as his two elder sons were being educated at Valladolid; and his past political misconduct had deprived him of the sympathies and aid of his natural ally, France. Charles, nevertheless, assumed a more courteous and obliging deportment towards the French envoy at Turin; and by a letter of thanks from king Henry, it seems that M. de Savoye caused the arrest of an individual supposed to harbour regicidal designs. He also betrothed his eldest daughter Marguerite to the prince of Mantua, nephew of queen Marie. As for the grand-duke Ferdinand of Tuscany, his relations with France were cold and resentful. Henry showed little alacrity to repay the loans either advanced by the Tuscan treasury during the civil war; or those guaranteed to other European capitalists by the sign-manual of the wealthy chief of the Medici. Henry threw the blame on Sully: the latter accused the king, who constantly put off the irksome duty of examining the contracts until the next privy-council. Giovannini, finding himself one day *tête-à-tête* with the king, took the opportunity to express his master's dissatisfaction at these dilatory proceedings; and proceeded to comment on the scandalous feuds of queen Marie's household:—"Her majesty, in my master's esteem, has at least two notable causes of complaint—to wit, the presence of madame la Marquise in Paris,

since that lady has been convicted of designs against the accession of M. le Dauphin; also that your majesty has been pleased to command that your legitimate and illegitimate children shall reside under the same roof, having governors and a household in common, under madame de Montglât." This remonstrance was peculiarly distasteful to the king, who showed impatience on this subject even to his faithful and privileged Sully. "Friendship and good concord, M. le chevalier, disdain to make money a basis—the grand-duke presumes too much on our forbearance and friendship!" "Sire, good faith and integrity maintain friendships: the Spanish cabinet has never yet broken its bond to the house of Medici." Henry made no reply; but after this interview—in which Giovannini, exasperated by the blame ascribed to him, had perhaps spoken without sufficient deference—the resentment manifested by the king induced the envoy to solicit his recall.¹ In the hope of restoring concord amongst the Italians of the royal household, Ferdinand condescended to consult Concini on the personage most eligible to represent Florence at the French court, instead of asking counsel from Don Giovanni de Medici; which weakness, the grand-duke afterwards explained, stating that he refrained from so doing, dreading

¹ Hist. del Granducato, lib. 5.

to anger the queen, who at this period refused to see her uncle in private. The king, on the contrary, showed especial favour to Don Giovanni, who was a prince of capacity, and whose knowledge of engineering rendered his opinion valuable. He possessed also, a handsome presence, and revelled in easy conviviality, and *bonne humeur*, qualities favoured by Henry. Don Giovanni, moreover, was a safe depository for Henry's domestic disquiets; his majesty's matrimonial raids were listened to by him with the sympathising attention, which they had ceased to command from Sully. The latter, wearied of the ignoble quarrels and rapacious demands of the royal mistresses, had absolutely refused to become again a mediator between Mesdames de Verneuil, Moret and des Essarts, "who in turn during the year 1606 lauded it over the court. The temper of the queen, provoked beyond patience by the indignity offered to her; and by the speculations still rife, and still unpunished relative to the comparative legitimacy of her son, and of the young Henri de Verneuil, vented itself in angry altercations, or in gloomy depression. Marie, under these circumstances, confined herself sometimes for weeks together to the society of her Italians, over whom ruled the Concinis; she suspected Sully, whose devotion to his royal master rendered him, she said, tolerant of his vices. Villeroy and M. de

Sillery stood high in Marie's good graces; as did the dukes d'Epemon, Bellegarde, Villars, and M. de Bassompierre. Early in the year 1607 strife broke forth again. Henry had neither the firmness, nor tact necessary to rule his wife; or to restrain the insolence of the women, who rendered the court of France a spectacle of wonder and commiseration to all the potentates of Europe.

From these disgraceful episodes it is refreshing to turn to the points of domestic character in which Henry may truly be commended. As a father he was judicious and exemplary. His watchfulness over his children never relaxed; and he required and perused the most minute details relative to their welfare and education. Numbers of billets addressed to their *gouvernante*, madame de Montglât, record his anxiety. Every infantine ache and pain caused the despatch of an express to his majesty. The king regulated the hours devoted to learning; the promenades of messieurs and mesdames; their changes of residence; a necessity unfortunately frequent, from the inroads of pestilence on the capital. The young dauphin, who early developed a headstrong disposition, seems to have been an object of great solicitude to his royal father. Henry authorized madame de Montglât to use the discipline of the rod, when necessary to subdue the stubborn humours of his young

heir. "I blame you, madame de Montglât, because you did not whip my son; for it is my will and command that, every time he is obstinate, or commits any wrong action, he is well flogged. I know from experience that nothing can profit him more; for at his age I was often myself soundly whipped. Therefore, it is my will that you so act; and make him (*M. le dauphin*) understand that such is the command given to you," wrote Henry from Fontainebleau to the governess over his children. Marie, however, who idolized her precious dauphin, disapproved strongly of so vigorous a system. One day when the king, queen, and their son were walking in the forest of Fontainebleau, Henry told Louis to jump across a little brooklet. The boy refused, and stubbornly declined to try to obey his father. The king thereupon took his cane, and chastised the prince severely, who screamed and ran towards his mother for protection. Marie burst into tears, and, taking the child in her arms, bitterly observed that, had it been one of his bastard children, the king would not have shown such severity. "Madame, it seems to me you do right to express the desire, as I have heard you do, that our lives may be of equal length; for assuredly the end of my life will be the commencement of your misery. You weep because I have chastised your son; but some day you will lament the sorrow he will cause you, or

the misfortunes which will happen to himself. Haughty and self-sufficient as you are, madame, and headstrong as he is, you will live to have evil days together.”¹

Henry’s prediction was realised; the young Louis, rendered more headstrong by his early accession to sovereign power, and by his mother’s injudicious treatment, resented the slightest opposition; until cowed by contact with a will of still greater fervour, he sank into comparative vassalage. The young duke de Vendôme was a handsome, amiable boy, without much intelligence; a perfect courtier, with tact sufficient to conciliate the queen by slavish devotion to herself and her son. The great desire of the king was to conclude his union with the heiress of Mercœur; but Madame de Mercœur, who since the demise of the duke resided with her daughter in a convent, showed coldness in the matter; and was suspected of repenting the concession of her daughter’s hand, which she and her deceased husband had been induced to make, to escape attainder. Madame de Mercœur, who was devout, feared for the morals of her daughter’s betrothed, beset by the evil seductions and example of the court. The young Françoise had no

¹ Hist. de la Mère et du Fils. Les principaux sujets de la mauvaise intelligence d’entre le feu roi et la reine Marie. —Font. 446-148—Béth. 3944, fol. 39, MS.

enjouement of character—and loved the quiet and ease of the cloister: indolence was her besetting sin; and this foible she carried to excess in after life, and lived bolstered up by cushions, which her valets carried after her and deposited for her use, even when she paid visits of ceremony. The two princesses¹ were pretty children, docile and attached to their father. Young as they were, the future alliances of his daughters engaged the royal attention. Henry was of opinion that the interest of his realm would best be served by the espousals of the princesses with princes below kingly rank;² he therefore bestowed no countenance on the proposal, eagerly supported by queen Marie, that the hand of the infanta Anne should be demanded for the dauphin; and Madame Elizabeth affianced to the prince of the Asturias. The darling of the king and the plaything of the court, was the lovely and witty little princess Gabrielle, daughter of Madame de Verneuil, whose pretty graces and coquetry won smiles and bonbons even from her majesty. The daughter of Gabrielle d'Estrées, Henriette Catherine, was considered as the

¹ The princesses Elizabeth and Christine de France.

² Hist. de la Mère et du Fils. “Il (le roi) temoignoit souvent être de tout éloigné de marier sa fille ainé au roy d'Espagne, qui depuis la épouseé; alleguant pour raison que la disposition de ces deux etats etait telle que la grandeur de l'un etoit l'abaissement de l'autre.”

affianced bride of the heir of Montmorency :¹ her temperament was sensitive, and inclined to melancholy ; but mention is seldom made of her in the royal correspondence. A number of the children of the chief nobles shared the education of messieurs and mesdames. The dauphin was taught to ride, to vault, and to dance. His precocious reserve and gravity, however, prevented him from taking delight in any of these pastimes : from his childhood Louis showed aptitude in matters only of ceremonial, and punctuality in performing his devotions at stated hours and seasons.

Amid these varied distractions Sully and his royal master were not unmindful of the internal improvements of the realm. Great works were proceeding in Paris : the Pont Neuf, La Samaritaine, and La Place Royale were designed, and commenced. Canals were projected, of immense length and importance ; while the attention of the great minister was directed even to stocking the rivers with fish, so as to afford abundant and cheap food to the poorer classes of his majesty's subjects. Agriculture was patronized by Sully ; his royal master, therefore, was induced to abandon to the plough certain extensive tracts on the domain, originally portions of the royal chace, which Sully caused to be cleared, drained, and sown with grain.

¹ This princess eventually married the duke d'Albœuf.

The royal stables excited the more genuine solicitude of the king. Henry's passion for horses was only exceeded by that of the Constable de Montmorency, whose stud, consisting of more than 400 horses, was considered as one of the wonders of France. This establishment was kept at the Château de Merlon : for the celebrated stables at Chantilly were built by the grandson of Montmorency, the great Condé. Fountains, which were invented in this reign by Claude de Moncontour, were distributed throughout the gardens of St. Germain and Fontainebleau. During the session of the States of Rouen Moncontour had submitted a miniature model of his invention to the king, and to M. de Retz. The wealthy financier subsequently erected two fountains on his own domain of Stur, near to Paris. The court flocked to behold the "marvellous machines" when in play. Henry and Marie were enchanted ; and, under the superintendence of Moncontour, the new gardens at St Germain were adorned by fountains and cascades, the which for long afterwards rendered the beautiful terrace of this château the favourite resort of the Parisians. The royal establishment for the rearing of silkworms likewise prospered ; and grants were made to promote the weaving of silk at Lyons. The looms had been objects of great interest to Henry's grandmother, the accomplished Marguerite d'Angoulême, who sent

many exquisite patterns of her own design, for the rich brocades which even then made the renown of Lyons and its vicinity.

These patriotic and wise grants of the public money were cheerfully ratified by Sully; great, however, was the chagrin of the minister at the sums drained from the treasury, to satisfy the rapacity of the ladies of the court, or to portion the king's illegitimate children. At the close of the year 1606, in addition to the income settled on Madame de Verneuil and Madame de Moret, the king granted a dotation to the two daughters born to him by Madame des Essarts,¹ both of whom were subsequently legitimatised. The eldest of these children, Jeanne Baptiste de Bourbon, was placed at this period in the convent of Chelles by her royal father. She took the veil there, and subsequently became coadjutrix of the abbess of Fontevrault; which royal convent she afterwards ruled as abbess with consummate prudence and skill for forty-three years. The abbess of Fontevrault was head of the order, although it comprehended many male communities; for such had been the decree of the pious founder, St. Robert d'Arbrissel. The abbess, consequently, adminis-

¹ Charlotte des Essarts, comtesse de Romorentin, daughter of François des Essarts, seigneur de Sontourt, et de Charlotte de Harlay Chanvallon. She married, first, the cardinal de Guise; secondly, François, marechal de l'Hôpital. She died in 1651.

tered absolutely the immense revenues of the order; she ordained laws, and her abbatial seal was affixed to all charters and mandates. These privileges were disputed, under the reign of the abbess Jeanne de Bourbon, by the prior of a neighbouring monastery—an offshoot of Fontevrault. This dignitary refused to address the abbess as Holy Mother, deeming the subjection derogatory. The abbess appealed to her royal nephew Louis XIII., who issued an edict commanding that the rule of St. Robert d'Arbrissel should be strictly followed. No further attacks were hazarded on the supremacy of this spirited lady; who ruled her convents and monasteries, with all their foreign dependencies, with a vigour which would have elicited the applause of her royal father. The abbess died in 1680: when the prior of Fontevrault administered the last sacrament of the church, he used the usual formula of *Accipe Soror Viaticum, &c.* The dying woman fixed her eyes steadily on his face, and murmured—the ruling passion being strong even in death—“Say *Mater*,—does not my edict command you so to do?”¹ The youngest daughter of Henry and Charlotte des Essarts became abbess of Chelles;² her dotation was 100,000 francs, extorted from Sully by the abso-

¹ Dreux du Radier, t. 5, p. 323.

² Marie Henriette de Bourbon, abbess of Chelles, died February 10th, 1629.

lute command of the king. Provision was also in contemplation for the son of Madame de Verneuil, who was destined to the ecclesiastical state; and who had already been endowed with the abbey of St. Simphorien, and the coadjutorship of the diocese of Metz.

In Italy, meanwhile, a quarrel between the Holy See and the Venetian Republic threatened to renew the horrors of war. The arrest and execution of a priest for seduction and murder, which judicial act was followed by other processes against members of the ecclesiastical order guilty of atrocious crimes, first roused the ireful protest of Paul V. The seignory proceeded to aggravate their offence by passing two decrees:—one of which interdicted ecclesiastics from accepting bequests of real property; the other forbade pious individuals to build churches or monasteries within the limits of the republic, without a special licence from the senate. The pope denounced these acts; he peremptorily demanded that the accused priests should be delivered up to be tried before his tribunals; and also the repeal of the obnoxious edicts, which struck at the supremacy of the Holy See, the welfare of the Church, and of those pious individuals who found solace in such endowments. The senate firmly upheld its authority to punish criminals guilty of enormous offences, whether laymen or ecclesiastics—and asserted the right of the state to place bounds to the growth of monastic institutions, which, in a

territory so circumscribed, might, in process of time, absorb the whole community. Pope Paul haughtily reiterated his commands; he directed the senate to renounce jurisdiction over ecclesiastics under pain of interdict; while he refused to discuss the matter with Donato, envoy from the Republic. The Genoese government, also, had incurred the reprobation of Rome for having presumed to restrain the busy intrigues of the Oratorians, the order dominant in Genoa. The feud gathered in bitterness, fomented by the wily comments and affected commiseration of the cabinet of Madrid. The duke d'Escalona exhorted the pope to uphold the prerogatives of the Holy See, and to make no compromise; while Philip III., in a holograph letter, assured Paul of his sympathy. The Sacred College was divided in opinion: the majority of cardinals, however, being chiefly ecclesiastics of Spanish origin, or nominated by the favour of Philip, counselled his holiness, after unsheathing his spiritual weapons, to assail the Republic by land and by sea. Paul readily entertained these hostile counsels. Of despotic temper, and in the prime of life, when every enterprise seems of easy accomplishment, the pope resolved to punish the arrogance which had prompted the senate to venture upon so signal a defiance. A second brief was, therefore, transmitted to Venice, couched in language of still greater sternness and reproof. The illness and demise of the doge Grimani

caused a temporary suspension of the matter. Leonardo Donato, the able ambassador of the Republic in Rome, being unanimously elected to the vacant dignity, continued the negotiation; and nominated as his envoy to the Holy See the cavalier Piero Duodo. After his arrival in Rome attempts were made to adjust the matter; but as the senate declined to accept any of the arbitrary concessions proposed, Paul summoned a consistory, and on the 17th of April 1606, launched a sentence of interdict against the Venetian States. The decree was met in Venice by a like spirit of defiance: all ecclesiastics were forbidden to read the Bull in public; to obey its behests; or to suspend the celebration of Divine worship, under pain of banishment, and seizure of temporalities. An edict was next passed by the senate, suspending the privileges of all the religious orders amongst which the monitory was read and observed; but banishing the Jesuits, and confiscating their substance. Preparations for war were actively commenced on both sides: Fuentes viceroy of Milan, who continued to be imbued with intense hate of the French, hailed the prospect, and marched to the borders of the Valteline, a step which was regarded as an open menace by Henri Quatre. Venice fought with the pen in defence of her liberty, while making levies and equipping her fleets. Writings swarmed, audaciously questioning the spiritual power of the papacy. The wording of

the act of interdict provoked a thousand cavils: it was alleged to be informal, ungrammatical, and a document to be altogether disregarded. Throughout the year 1606 Italy was thus threatened by the outbreak of a bloody war: her princes prepared to range themselves under one or other of the hostile banners—that of Spain and the Popedom; or that of the lion of St. Mark, in alliance, as it was prophesied, with the fleurs-de-lis of France. Henry, however, intervened unexpectedly, in the character of a mediator; and when he nominated the cardinal de Joyeuse as his resident envoy in Rome, he directed his eminence to visit Venice and make attempt to adjust the quarrel. The deportment of Joyeuse was characterized by infinite tact and discretion. Aware of the susceptibility of the Venetians in all that related to foreign intervention, the cardinal remained at Ferrara; from whence he despatched envoys to Venice and to Rome to solicit the assent of his holiness and of the doge Donato, to “present proposals on behalf of his Christian majesty, to facilitate the negotiations so ably commenced by the ambassadors d’Alincourt and Du Fresne.” Permission was graciously accorded; whereupon Joyeuse arrived in Venice and commenced his arduous duties. For two months he patiently laboured at the task of conciliation. The senate declined to offer apology to the Holy See; or to rescind the decree which ordained the expulsion of the

Jesuits. "Paul V. is young and inexperienced," said the doge; "moreover, he is badly counselled, and has rashly involved himself in these grave differences. His holiness knows not the character of the Venetian people; or he would doubtless have hesitated to expose the Holy See to the disgrace of defeat, and perhaps of ruin, as regards ecclesiastical temporalities. My age enables me, without arrogance, to give a lesson to a pontiff whom, comparatively, I may look upon as youthful!" The pontiff of whom the doge Donato spoke so patronizingly had nevertheless accomplished his fifty-fourth year; and believed himself to be, while in alliance with Philip III., the supreme ruler of Christendom. The Venetians, to avoid a war calamitous either in its issue of triumph or defeat, offered, by the counsel of Henri IV. to give up the imprisoned priests, Saraceno and Valdemarino; and to suspend, though not to abrogate, the edicts anathematized by Paul: moreover, the Republic consented to the re-establishment of the monastic orders, excepting that of the Jesuits. Joyense quitted Venice to lay these proposals before the pope. On his arrival in Rome he summoned Baronius and du Perron, who happened to be there sojourning. The former prelate held the defiance of the Republic to be little short of sacrilegious; and had earnestly counselled the pope to uphold the supremacy of the Holy See, and the privileges of the Church. The argu-

ments of Joyeuse, and the perusal of the concessions extorted from the Venetians, nevertheless satisfied Baronius; who deemed that the interests of one order, however eminent and devoted, ought not to impede the settlement of a question involving the peace of Europe. He accordingly, in concert with du Perron, promised support to the overtures of Joyeuse; and engaged to neutralize, as far as possible, the hostility of the Spanish faction of the Sacred College. The first audience of the cardinals with his holiness was unpropitious. Paul V. persisted in exacting the recall of the Jesuits; and the absolute cancelling of the edicts which interdicted the bequest of lands to the Church. The demand seemed the more arbitrary, inasmuch as the pope himself had promulgated a similar ordinance throughout the States of the Church, on the occasion of some appropriations effected by the chapter of Loretto. During the evening of the same day du Perron had secret audience of the pope, in the presence of the nephew and minister of his holiness, Cardinal Borghese. The persuasion of the subtle prelate, his masterly summary of the condition of European politics, and his contrast of the vigour and power of Henri Quatre with the languid and retrogressive policy of Philip III. made profound impression. Paul, therefore, reduced his conditions to the single concession

of the recall of his favourite order, with their brethren the Dominicans, Capucins, and Theatines, exiled for obedience to the decree of interdict. The delays of the pope irritated the senate so greatly, that public disputations had been sanctioned by the seignory, on the relative merits of the Greek and Reformed creeds. The turbulent attitude of the people, and the odium which had befallen the priesthood, occasioned intense solicitude to the doge and his council. The resentment of Spain was also to be apprehended, if peace was concluded through the good offices of France, against her will and policy. The conde de Fuentes was a dangerous neighbour. The doge, therefore, moved by these considerations, made application to the Spanish ambassador, and prayed him to entreat Philip, as a mark of personal friendship, to induce the pope to abandon the cause of the Jesuits—an order, which no consideration could persuade the senate to recall. Donato added, with courtly guile, that the power of Philip could alone induce the supreme pontiff to relent in that condition! The interdict was at length annulled by the pope, on the intercession of the king of France, without overt opposition by Philip III. on the 21st of March 1607. The Venetians suspended their law against ecclesiastical appropriations; permitted the building of churches at the pleasure of pious indi-

viduals; recalled and cancelled their edicts against the supremacy of Rome; and agreed to reinstate all the banished orders, excepting the Jesuits. An ambassador was likewise to be despatched to Rome, to thank his holiness "that he had been pleased again to take the republic into favour;" but it was expressly stipulated that there should be no ceremony of public absolution. The honour of this compromise remained with king Henry, whose moderation was highly lauded. Hostile indications from France would have sufficed to involve Italy in warfare; and have again revived the contest between the old belligerent powers.¹

In the Low Countries also, the attitude of king Henry, and his politic counsels, combined to forward the pacification so long desired, and yet which appeared so hopelessly distant. The peaceful intents of the archdukes were constantly defeated by the insincerity of the Madrid cabinet; the intrigues of the conde de Fuentes; the wavering policy of the king of England; but chiefly by the uncompromising attitude of the States of Holland. To hasten the recognition of their independence, the Dutch despatched a powerful fleet, under their gallant admiral Jean de Heemskercke, to cruise on the coasts of Spain, with the intent of offering battle to the Spanish admiral Avila, who, with a power-

¹ De Thou, *Hist. de son Temps*. Duplex. *Journal de Henri IV.*

ful fleet, lay off Gibraltar. The audacity of this defiance startled the Spanish cabinet: that rebels whose military achievements, resources, and organization, had been invariably represented in Madrid as puerile, should presume to assail the flag of imperial Spain within her own harbours, offered a problem for painful reflection to the duke of Lerma. The reports of Spinola, moreover, were disquieting: he represented the condition of his troops as unsatisfactory; the soldiery being inclined to sedition, and being with difficulty restrained from plundering alike both friend and foe. The archdukes loathed the harassing warfare, and dispensed unequal justice—avenging sometimes trifling revolt with rigorous penalties; while at other periods they connived at the escape of delinquents guilty of flagrant misdemeanours. The rebel government, though pressed by pecuniary difficulties, and the vacillation of the monarchs its allies, yet upheld its authority; and, firmly enforcing the powers intrusted by the States, steered the republic triumphantly amid the manifold grievances and entanglements of the era. The panic and impatience of the Netherlanders was not lessened when news arrived of the encounter of the hostile fleets off Gibraltar, which ended in the total defeat and death of the Spanish admiral Avila, and the destruction of his fleet. The victorious Hollanders also paid dearly for their triumph by the loss of their valiant admiral

Heemskercke; whose remains were reverently conveyed to Amsterdam, and there interred with honours and public demonstrations of respect. The Spaniards lost two thousand men during the action; and the shattered remnant of their fleet fled for refuge under the guns of the port of Cadiz. At the same time a mutiny broke out in a detachment of the army under Spinola, which was suppressed only after rigorous executions. Such being the adverse condition of affairs, Albert and Isabella forwarded peremptory instructions to their envoys at the Hague, Wittenhorst and Jean de Gewart, to conclude an armistice of eight months with the States of Holland; in order that, during this suspension of arms, the articles of a lasting peace might be proposed and concluded between the crown of Spain and her rebel provinces. The envoy of the sovereigns was the Franciscan, Jean Neyen, an ecclesiastic, who, having once professed Lutheran opinions, was deemed to be a suitable negotiator between the stout-hearted Hollanders and their wily foe. The truce was accepted, after very rigid stipulations had been exacted; the States having previously wrung from the imperial envoys the unwelcome admission, "that negotiation was impracticable, except after the acknowledgment on the part of the king of Spain, and of the archduke, that the Seven Provinces had won independence, and were no longer fiefs of the Spanish monarchy,

but a free republic." The truce was signed March 4th 1667: preparation was then at once commenced for the important congress which was to confirm liberties so resolutely won. Henri Quatre nominated ambassadors to aid the Dutch by sage counsel; and to initiate the deputies chosen by the States in the routine and etiquette to be observed at the forthcoming conferences. The envoy chosen by the king was the illustrious and learned Jeannin, whose resource and statesmanship had been duly exercised during the stormy days of the League, and the political embarrassments of the early period of Henry's reign. With Jeannin was associated Paul Chouart de Buzenval, who had long held the post of ambassador of France at the Hague. The preliminaries of this famous congress were tedious and intricate. Philip III. reluctantly sanctioned and grudged every proposed concession; the archdukes deprecated a plenary abandonment of their sovereignty over the rebel provinces; while the members of the States General feared to be outwitted in their demands, and to find, when peace was signed, that some important privilege had been relinquished,—a dread, greatly enhanced by the gibing cautions transmitted to the Hague by king James of England, through his ambassador, Sir Richard Spencer.

During these transactions king Henry unconsciously laid the foundation of that power which

was, for a period, to render the crown omnipotent in France, by promoting the rise of "our well-beloved Armand Jules du Plessis, a deacon of the diocese of Paris, and brother of the Sieur de Richelieu." Henry had proved himself the good friend and master of Madame de Richelieu, from the period of her ejection from the household as *dame d'atours* by queen Marie.¹ The ability and aptitude of the young Armand du Plessis had often been brought under the royal notice; and the king promised to promote the advancement of the boy in the ecclesiastical career which he had chosen. At the end of the year 1607, Henry, therefore, instructed his ambassador in Rome the cardinal de Joyeuse, to solicit the promotion of his *protegé* to the see of Luçon; though by canon law Richelieu was then excluded by his youth from episcopal functions. Henry obtained his request: Pope Paul V. was anxious to conciliate the king; the orthodoxy of Richelieu was unimpeachable; his genius was extolled; while his parentage was illustrious. The career of the future great minister, the glory and yet the scourge of the reign of Henry's son and successor, now began in the distant and obscure town of Luçon. Queen Marie, when she haughtily accepted the *devoirs* of the newly-appointed prelate, was pro-

¹ See Part 2 of the History of the Reign of Henri IV.—Henry IV. and Marie de Medici, vol. 2.

bably assailed by no presentiment that in Richelieu she beheld the future avenger of her imperfectly-fulfilled duties as a wife, a mother, and a sovereign.

CHAPTER IV.

1608—1609.

Peaceful condition of Europe at the close of the year 1607—

The Houses of Medici, Gonzaga, and Borghése—Feuds of the court—Spanish tendencies of Madame la Marquise—Her ingratitude to the king—Monsieur and Madame Concini—Their baneful influence—Intrigue organized by Concini against Don Giovanni de Medici—The latter is compelled to leave France—Compromise effected between the king and queen Marie—Demise of the duke de Montpensier—Betrothal of his daughter and heiress to the young duke of Orleans—Accouchement of Queen Marie and birth of prince Gaston—Negotiations with Savoy—Progress of the peace congress at the Hague—Anxiety of Henry's ambassador to conclude a peace—Embassy of Don Pedro de Toledo—Alliance proposed between the dauphin and the Infanta Madame Ana—Declined by the king—Ambassage of the duke de Nevers to Rome—Madame de Nevers—Her want of favour at court—Correspondence between Henry and Madame de Verneuil—Further mitigation of the sentence pronounced on MM.

d'Entragues and de Verneuil—Financial inquisitions are instituted by the duke de Sully—Unpopularity of the measure—Edicts promulgated against duels, and to unite the hereditary patrimony of the king with the domain of the crown—Conclusion of peace between Spain and the Seven United Provinces.

THE year 1607 closed, leaving France at peace with the powers of Europe. Henry, though he rested from the toils of warfare, did not disarm. Abroad the pacification of the Low Countries, and the probable refusal of Philip III. to recognise the independence of Henry's allies in Holland, might at any moment demand an armed intervention. The king of Spain beset the government with intrigue—either by hostile counsels to the courts of Rome and England,—or by stirring up the animosity of Fuentes in Milan; and the weak resentment of the duke of Savoy. The possession of the fair Lombard provinces was now coveted by duke Charles with the same keenness as he had displayed before the peace of Lyons to annex Provence and Beaujolais. So far the monarchs of France and Spain had equal chances at Turin; and the bribe which caused the duke to vacillate from one alliance to the other, is facetiously alluded to in the despatches of the powers. With the Italian princes, indeed, Henry was not popular. The Farnese, Spanish by descent and inclination, hated France, and especially the king, whose exploits had sullied the fame of their great hero, Alexandro, duke of

Parma. The Gonzaga family, though closely allied to queen Marie, had been alienated by the disrespect shown to the young prince of Mantua when at Fontainebleau during the baptismal festivities. The pope, though cordial in his relations with Henri Quatre, acted as though he esteemed Philip III. to be a sovereign more mighty:—while the Borghese, nephews of his holiness, discovered that Spanish patronage was more available, for the accumulation of that colossal wealth for which they became, ere long, renowned.¹ Fresh feuds at the profligate court of France, had, meantime, evoked renewed hostility at Florence. To recount in detail the disgraceful and frivolous intrigues set afloat at this period by the royal mistresses, and elevated into importance by the furies of the queen, would desecrate the page of history. Altercations between the royal pair daily became more frequent; Henry insisted that his consort should receive Madame de Verneuil. Marie positively refused; and to avoid the importunity, she sometimes shut herself up for days

¹ Cardinal Borghese, the eldest nephew of his holiness, soon became possessed of one million sterling. His brothers also accumulated vast riches, and built the splendid palaces in Rome and at Frascati. The Spanish ambassador exclaimed, on viewing this last sumptuous edifice, “My king would not have undertaken, in such calamitous times as these are, so great a fabric for his diversion even in Madrid!”—Guaddi.

together in her cabinet, and admitted only Concini and his wife.¹ Once anger so overpowered her, that, in the presence of Sully, she raised her hand to strike the king. The minister interposed, and arrested the blow; but so roughly, that Marie afterwards declared that the duke struck her on the arm.² Madame de Verneuil, meantime, sent word to the king that she was weary of seclusion: and begged permission, as there seemed no chance of moving the compassion of her majesty, to retire to the court of London, or to that of Madrid. To render her demand the more emphatic, Henriette again professed the utmost devotion for religion; while her letters to the king were written in language of affected dignity and injury, which would have been ludicrous, but for the impression which they produced upon his majesty. Madame de Verneuil, also, recommenced her study of the Spanish language; and commanded that her children should be rendered familiar with the tongue spoken in a country “which probably must become their refuge from the unhappy malice of the queen.” One day when at St. Germain, Henry attended matins in the chapel, accompanied by all

¹ Les principaux sujets de la mauvaise intelligence d'entre le roy Henri IV. et la reine Marie de Medici. Bibl. Imp. MS. Béth. 8944, fol. 39.

² Hist. de la Mère et du Fils.—The duke de Sully told the author, cardinal Richelieu then bishop of Luçon, “qu’il ne les avoit jamais vus huit jours sans querelle!”

his children. Observing that the little M. de Metz, Henriette's son, was occupied some time in thrusting a bulky book of Hours into his pocket, the king called the child, and took the volume from him. The book was a Spanish missal. So open a defiance greatly angered Henry; the more so when he learned from Madame de Montglât, governess of the royal children, that the book had been sent by Madame la Marquise as a new year's gift to her son. "Your specious promises, madame, are now accepted by me only when they are realized; but when you make them to shield your own misdeeds, I always know them to be worthless and false. This morning at matins I took a book of prayer in Spanish from your son; he told me the book was your gift. It is my will that my said son shall not even know that there exists a Spain; and you, also, who have not had much to thank the said country for, ought to desire eternal oblivion for such. I have seldom felt so displeased with your conduct. I believe, however, that you care little for my opinion:—therefore, madame, as you have views of your own, pursue them at your peril, and as you please."¹ The royal letters were daily thus

¹ Bibl. de l'Arsenal, MSS. Hist., No. 170. Also *Lettres Missives*, Beger de Xivrey, t. 7. The following day Henry wrote a second harsh reprimand—his majesty says in this letter: "Je tiens en une chose à la divinité, je demande la conversion—non la mort. C'est à vous à parler François là-dessus; que j'entendray toujours fort volontiers, estant

diversified either by menaces or by entreaty : the jealousy and self-interest of la Marquise, however, were now roused ; for while she was away from Paris her rivals reigned supreme at the joyous revels of the hôtels Zamet and de Gondy. Henriette deemed it important to her future fortunes, to break the interdiction which exiled her from the capital ; or to extort from his majesty the “renunciation of his assumed right to control her conduct, and to forbid a matrimonial alliance.” The time, however, had not arrived when Henry could return the threats of his unworthy mistress by indifference : his weak deprecation of her wrath emboldened Madame de Vernenil, at the commencement of the new year, to attempt a *coup de main*, which, she trusted, might effectually silence the queen, and put her opponents to the rout. As it was through the influence of Concini and his wife that Henriette after the royal marriage obtained *entrée* to the Louvre, she again tested their willingness to serve her through M. Zamet. M. and Madame Concini, however, had no influence without the chamber of queen Marie. Eleanore seldom obtained notice from the king, and pursued contentedly the even tenour of her duties. Concini frequently shrank before the haughty condescen-

ma langue d'inclination. Si vous avez le diable au corps, attendez là où vous êtes ; si quelque bon diable vous possède, venez à Marcoussi, où étant plus près, les effets s'en cognoistront mieux !”—Ibid.

sions of the lords of Henry's household; and coveted nothing so intensely as vengeance. The reply of the subtle Italian, therefore, was, "that duty to the queen prevented his wife and himself from espousing the interests of a woman whose tongue daily inflicted outrage on her royal mistress." This response exasperated Henriette to such a degree, that she resolved to suborn assassins to kill Concini; presuming that the king would feel such joy at being rid of so obnoxious a personage, that her deed might pass with impunity. The Marquise actually hired her bravoës; and would most likely have succeeded in her object, when one of the men engaged in the plot was arrested for a trifling theft in Florence, and papers were found on him which revealed the design. The grand-duke thereupon unguardedly notified the discovery to his niece: the rage of her majesty amounted to frenzy; and she despatched peremptory orders to her uncle to put the culprit to death.¹ Ferdinand declined to accede to this request; the more especially as the king remained silent, and don Giovanni de Medici treated the matter as unimportant. During the following few months the tide of scandal never rose higher in Paris. Concini, to avenge himself, threatened Henriette; defied don Giovan-

¹ *Istoria del Granducato*, lib. quinto, p. 466.

ni de Medici, whose private character he sought to blacken by infamous insinuations. "I would bury my dagger in the heart of this accursed villain, was it not for the fear of sully-ing the blazon of Medici by shedding such ignoble blood!" exclaimed don Giovanni.¹ Henry, meanwhile, after a stormy scene with his wife, escaped from the palace, boiling over with passion, and commanded preparation to be made for his instant departure for Chantilly. First, his majesty repaired to the Arsenal to consult the duke de Sully. His advice to the king—counsel so often repeated—was, "Renounce your mistress; or compel the queen to silence and submission!" The king unfolded his trouble to his faithful Rosny; and besought him again to wait upon the queen and remonstrate; at the same time. he authorized the duke to notify the resolve he had taken, to exile all the Italians of the household and to commit her majesty to close custody in his château of Pau. Sully was also directed to declare that the queen, proving by the warmth of her temper, and by her injudicious outbursts, that she was not competent to undertake the grave duties of regent of France, in case the death of the king intervened before the majority of the dauphin, it was the royal intention to nominate one of the princes of the blood to discharge those important

¹ Ibid.

functions. To Madame de Verneuil Sully was instructed to address a sharp reprimand; in which Henriette was commanded to make submission to her majesty. Concini was likewise warned that a single act of violence would suffice for his exile; while don Giovanni was entreated magnanimously to forgive the aspersions showered upon him. Sully reluctantly promised obedience: for Henry was peremptory. On repairing to the Louvre, Sully found confusion and affright within the palace. Marie was shut up in her cabinet alone, and refused to admit any person. At the door of the chamber Madame Concini crouched, her head resting against the door, tears streaming from her eyes. When she beheld Sully, Eleanore sprang joyfully to greet him; but retired in dismay before the stern salutation of the minister. In obedience to his command, she timidly announced his presence to her royal mistress. A bolt was undrawn, and the queen herself appeared, and beckoned to Sully to enter. The face of her majesty was inflamed with anger, and with tears: she was occupied in writing to the king. She sullenly heard the royal message, and the duke's comments, and then put her unfinished letter in the duke's hand.¹

¹ Sully, liv 25ème. Also *Économies Royales*, for the original recital of these events as submitted to the duke, and corrected by his hand.

Sully was aghast at the daring and bitterness of the language employed: every wrong was paraded with aggravating distinctness; and her majesty's observations on the conjugal delinquencies of her husband seemed to render reunion hopeless. Sully then appealed to the queen's judgment, to her maternal love, to her patriotism—he addressed her as mother of the future king, as well as queen-consort. Marie was at length so far vanquished, that she consented to modify her letter, provided that every topic introduced should be dwelt upon; though in language more dutiful and becoming. The queen's reproaches and complaints, however, were too real not to give offence to the king, in whatever language they were clothed. Marie felt her wrongs with the susceptibility of a character vehement as vindictive. The astute Sully had need of all his tact and influence to moderate the language of this letter, so as to satisfy the queen; and maintain the respect owing to majesty. Its one theme was Madame de Verneuil, her slanders and assumptions. “Since I have become fully aware of the conduct of her whom it is vain to mention, I have, sire, recognized that my cause is combined with the preservation of your life, your realm, and the prosperity of our children. I have, therefore, deemed it not only legitimate, but my bounden duty, and affecting my honour and my loyalty, to pray, to supplicate, and to

conjure you to relinquish a friendship hateful to your subjects, prejudicial to your health, and the bane of your life, and of my welfare and repose.”¹ Marie appealed to the royal compassion; to Henry’s marriage vows; and took God to witness, that if he vouchsafed her the suit she preferred, she would never molest Madame la Marquise nor his children. “And why should I not inform the king that I also have opportunity to wring his heart, as he tortures mine. There are cavaliers not so insensible as his majesty!” exclaimed Marie, passionately. The queen alluded to the duke de Bellegarde; whose assiduities had been watched for some time by the courtiers with amusement and curiosity. Sully listened in despair: “Madame,” replied he, gravely, “take my counsel: refrain from making such an avowal. No man of common sense will believe that any individual would be presuming enough to address a princess of your altitude in the language of love, unless you had met such person half-way. The king will believe that you make confession because you dare not longer withhold the secret; or that you wish to consign to destruction him whom you thus denounce, your majesty having now met with another cavalier more agreeable to your taste.”² The duke afterwards

¹ Sully, *Œconomies Royales*, in which the queen’s letter is transcribed.

² *Hist. de la Mère et du Fils*, p. 10.—Richelieu, pub-

discovered that Concini had advised his royal mistress to resort to this expedient in order to pique the king; a device from which Marie luckily suffered herself to be dissuaded by Sully.

The amended letter was taken home by Sully, who wished to add thereto a few conciliatory paragraphs. The queen promised to honour the minister by a visit the same day, to receive back the document; which she engaged to copy and forward to Chantilly. The effect of the letter on the temper of the king was the reverse of what Sully had hoped: early the following morning the duke was aroused by a missive from his royal master: "*Mon ami—* I have just received the most impertinent letter from my wife, though I am not so offended with her as with him who dictated it; for I plainly see that the style is not her own. Enquire and discover for me its author. I will never see him nor hear of him more."¹ Sully took the royal declaration with tranquillity. After the lapse of a few days Henry arrived in Paris, and called at the Arsenal. Sully then related his interview with the queen; and avowed that he had partly dictated the letter in question. "Oh!" said Henry; "well, *mon ami*, as this is your work, we will say no

lished under the name of the royal historiographer Eudes de Mezerai.

¹ (*Economies Royales*, edit. orig., ch. 9.)

more about it.”¹ The royal pair for weeks afterwards maintained virtual divorce, though abiding under the same roof; and the near approach of the queen’s *accouchement* alone hastened her reconciliation with her husband, who, as usual, was compelled to purchase peace at the cost of honour and repute. Concini and Don Giovanni de Medici still remained at open feud: the former had every peril to dread from the resentment of the grand-duke, who was faithfully informed of the proceedings of “this upstart adventurer.” Marie continued to insist that her uncle should quit Paris; and the whole court remained in hopeless confusion. Concini at length humbly asked audience of the king, to vindicate himself from the calumnies of his foes. At this interview, it appears that he offered to mediate between the queen and Madame de Verneuil, so as to induce his royal mistress to consent to the return of la Marquise, and to offer concession to his majesty, on the simple condition that Don Giovanni received an order to leave Paris. Henry was not ashamed to comply, when he ought to have punished, by immediate banishment, the insolence of such offered mediation. During the course of his conversation with the king, Concini hinted that a plot had been organized in certain foreign quarters to assassinate his

¹ Ibid.

majesty; but that the enemies of the royal person would find their schemes frustrated by the returning harmony between their majesties. Concini was as good as his word: he reconciled the royal pair, by what means was never known; and the queen tacitly consented, after an interval, to the return of Madame de Verneuil. Don Giovanni was sacrificed; Henry, under pretext that mysterious revelations had reached him relative to the participation of Don Giovanni in certain political and regicidal plots, took occasion to withdraw his society and patronage. Explanation was demanded and refused. Don Giovanni, therefore, with great spirit, announced his approaching departure from France,—a decision much regretted by Villeroy, who derived great assistance from the military knowledge of the prince. Henry, conscious that he was sacrificing his friend to an unjust suspicion, and to the clamour of an unworthy faction, relieved his conscience by offering him a pension. The proposal was rejected indignantly; and Don Giovanni soon after accepted service from the Venetian republic.¹ In France it was bruited that the cause of the departure of the prince arose from the rooted dislike evinced by her majesty; and his own non-observance of religious duties during the season of Lent. A manuscript relation of these

¹ Hist. del Granducato, lib. quinto, 466-7, et seq.

quarrels from the hand of an eye-witness states, that the king and queen, distracted by mutual jealousy and distrust, feared, at this period, even to eat together, lest either should have resolved to poison the other.¹ The threat made by the king to deprive Marie of her nomination as regent, however, worked with salutary effect. The queen always predicted that some day supreme power would centre in her hands,—when she should know how to reward her friends, and punish her enemies. The old countess de Sault was the chief recipient of the queen's confidences on this dangerous subject; and often entertained her majesty by anecdotes of the regency of Catherine de Medici. One day the queen was imprudent enough to send an order to M. du Tillet, keeper of the State Archives in the Bastille and elsewhere, directing him to send, for her inspection, the registers, and portfolios, containing notices and documents of the regency of queen Catherine; with the *procès verbal* of all the ceremonies of state at which her ancestress had presided as regent of France.² Du Tillet, before he obeyed this mandate, required an order from Sully, and made application to the minister. The duke directed that Marie's ill-timed curiosity should not be gratified; and suggested to M. du Tillet a variety of excuses by which he might

¹ MS. B  th. 8944, fol. 39, Bibl. Imp.

² MS. B  th. 1944, fol. 89.

evade the importunities of her majesty. At length the period of the queen's lying-in drew near, and she retired to Fontainebleau, to the unspeakable relief of the royal council; and especially of the dukes de Sully and de Villeroy, who hailed the departure from Paris of her majesty and her obnoxious *clique*.

The demise of the duke de Montpensier, in February of this year 1608, added to the many chagrins which gathered round the king. The duke never recovered from the wound in the throat and jaw which he had received at the siege of Dreux: his sufferings at intervals were intense; and towards the close of his life he endured torments from hunger, as he was unable to swallow. The duke had one daughter by his wife Henriette Catherine, daughter of the ex-marshal and cardinal de Joyeuse. The thought of his infant child, sole heiress of his enormous wealth and dignities, added to the duke's distresses. Madame de Montpensier had little intellect or constancy; but she was lively, pretty, and heiress of the riches and the name of Joyeuse. Her second marriage, therefore, seemed not an improbable event; and the duke was anxious for his daughter's interests and happiness. To his indulgent master Montpensier confided his disquietude, and offered his daughter's hand to the king for his second son, M. d'Orleans, who had just completed his first year. Henry accepted the alliance of the infant heiress; and promised

forthwith to adopt her as his daughter. The ceremony of the affiancing of the children was performed by the duke's couch, in the presence of the queens Marie, and Marguerite de Valois, and the princes of the blood.¹ The duke signed his will on the same day; in which he constituted his daughter sole heiress of his duchies, fiefs, and rich personalty, with remainder to the duke of Orleans, and to the dauphin, in case Marie de Montpensier died without children. The dower of the duchess de Montpensier, which corresponded with the wealth which she brought to her husband, was also to revert at her decease to her daughter. A few years after this contract was made, the young duke of Orleans died,² when his brother Gaston, was substituted as Marie's bridegroom, and invested with all the benefits accruing therefrom. One important omission was made, however, which proved the source of endless dissension between Marie's daughter La Grande Mademoiselle, and her father Gaston duke of Orleans. The prince affianced first to Marie de Montpensier was to enjoy her vast revenues, amounting to £160,000 a year for life: the

¹ De Thou, *Hist. de son Temps*, vol. 15, edit. de Londres. The infant Marie de Montpensier had scarcely completed her second year.

² The young prince died in 1611, the year after the assassination of his father. His next brother Gaston succeeded to the title and appanage of Orleans, as well as to the hand of the young duchesse de Montpensier.

second contract took away this power, so that at the premature demise of the young duchess of Orleans,¹ her lands passed from the father to his only daughter. M. de Montpensier was interred in la Sainte Chapelle, at Champigny in Poitou, the burial place of his race.² "The king wept for the death of this great man," writes M. de Thou, "to whom his majesty felt himself to be under great obligations. The court also appeared to be convulsed with grief. His obsequies were solemnized at Notre Dame with the pomp befitting a king; and his body was conveyed by his servants for interment in the tomb of his ancestors at Champigny." The lamented demise of Montpensier held the court in gloom and mourning until the birth of a third prince, who became eventually the consort of the young heiress of Montpensier, born on St. Mark's day April 25, 1608. The child was baptised by Jean de Bonzi bishop of Beziers, and received the name of Gaston. Disputes, as usual, occurred between their majesties as to the appanage and title to be conferred on the new-born prince. The queen wished her son to bear the title of prince of Navarre; but the king, desiring to follow ancient precedents

¹ The duchess of Orleans died after giving birth to her first child, La Grande Mademoiselle, May 29, 1627.

² MS. Bibl. Imp. Fontanien, 450-1.

on record, for the dignities and appanages borne by the children of France, decided that the young prince should be called duke d'Anjou.¹

Whilst the king was at Fontainebleau, he received certain propositions from the duke of Savoye, which unfortunately met with a ready response from the warlike humour of the king. At home, Henry had never been less at his ease: his government, it was true, flourished under the iron discipline of Sully: but the minister was hated, especially by the royal princes, for his harsh assumptions, oppressive taxes, and for his heretical faith. Henry was also saddened by failing health, by the loss of old friends, and by the rumour, and in some cases by the absolute discovery, of plots to take his life. The fear at times agitated his majesty's mind, that those nearest to his throne participated in these conspiracies. Henriette de Balzac and her family, indeed, had appeared before the tribunal of the nation as convicted traitors: and the king found it difficult to disbelieve the fact plainly stated by Sully and Villeroy, that they still tampered;

¹ Dupleix, Hist. de France. De Serres. Relation de Louise Bourgeois, Sage Femme de la reine. Archives Curieuses, t. 14. "C'étoit un gros et gras enfant: La Renouillière, femme de chambre de la reine, rencontra un des valets du roy, qui de joie la baisa d'un si bon courage qu'elle qui n'avoit plus qu'une dent pour la decoration de sa bouche il la luy mis dedans."

and were ready again to jeopardize their lives to overthrow the legitimacy of his marriage with Marie de Medici, and to obtain the liberation of M. d'Auvergne from the Bastille. Henry's most joyous days were spent at Fontainebleau; in the glades and woodlands of the magnificent forest, the king forgot the dissensions and the cares which beset him. Devoted to his favourite pastime of the chase, Henry often there sought relaxation from the cares and responsibilities of royalty. The ambassador from M. de Savoye, one colonel Purpuret, found the king at Fontainebleau. He arrived about a week after the birth of the prince Gaston, who, after the demise of his brother, assumed the title of duke of Orleans. The duke de Nemours had been the recipient of duke Charles's complaints of the insolence and oppression of the cabinet of Madrid; especially in the ignominious patronage shown by Philip III. to the young princes of Savoye, who were still detained in Spain. The tyranny of Fuentes in Lombardy, and the menace of the count that the exhibition of one single token of enmity by Savoye, would suffice for the occupation of the duchy by Spanish troops, exasperated the duke, and made him anxiously seek the support of France. The Spain of Philip III. was not the powerful united Spain of Charles V.; nor yet the Spain which had crouched with mingled admiration and fear under the strong sceptre of Philip II. The duke de Lerma was

weak in design ; and ready to sacrifice much for the maintenance of peace. The court was no longer that valiant assemblage of *ricos hombres*, which met at Toledo, to pay homage to the great emperor, and his world-famed captains ; or to salute with trembling lips the gloomy but able despot, his son and successor, who ruled empires by his pen as Charles had done by the sword. The vices of the court of France had in degree inoculated that of Madrid. Philip III. loved dissipation better than politics or polemics ; while his queen Marguerite preferred an easy jaunting from convent to convent, drinking chocolate and talking scandal, to the lonely vigils, and self-inflicted austerities of the queens her predecessors. The duke of Savoy, therefore, proposed to Henri Quatre an alliance, the object of which should be to drive Fuentes from Lombardy ; and to annex that fair province to France. The duke stated that the Milanese nobles were ready for revolt ; and that he was willing to permit the march of a French army through his territories : that in case the war was successful, king Henry should restore to Savoy the county of Bresse, Bugey, Val Romney, and Gex—territories ceded to France by the treaty of Lyons. That the king should withdraw his protection from Geneva, and not oppose the absorption of that territory into the duchy ; that the king should permit him to attack Franche Comté ; and aid him in wresting that province from Spain. Finally, the duke

proposed the marriage of his daughter with the dauphin; or, if the king had contracted other engagements for his son, that his majesty should give his eldest daughter to the prince de Piedmont.¹ In support of these his propositions, which subverted the peace concluded at Vervins, it was argued and alleged by duke Charles, "that the realm was overstocked with a valiant nobility and commonalty: thus France might be compared to a puissant gladiator, who, if long inactive, became plethoric, and subject to dangerous maladies: that Spain continued to refuse to France the restoration of the county of Artois, though the sum for which that ancient domain of the crown had been mortgaged, was offered to the cabinet of Madrid: that Philip likewise declined to restore Navarre, Naples, Milan, and the Genoese territory to the French; that the Spanish government fomented seditions and rebellions in France; and had seduced from their allegiance the marshal de Biron, M. d'Entragues, and the count d'Auvergne; and had even tampered with the loyalty of the constable de Montmorency." Henry replied: "That he acknowledged the injuries and grievances inflicted upon France by the hostility of Spain; that he appreciated the goodwill of M. de Savoye, and

¹ De Thou, vol. 15. Dupleix—Hist. de France. Guichenon—Hist. de la Royale Maison de Savoye. Sully, Œconomies Royales.

approved of his scheme under certain contingencies. His reservations were, that under no circumstances could he abandon the protection of Geneva; and that no treaty should be signed until M. de Savoye had ascertained the forces he could bring into the field; the humour of the people of the Lombardy; and until the proposed pacification between the Dutch, the king of Spain, and the archdukes was concluded, or finally abandoned. Henry despatched M. de Vaucelas brother of the duchesse de Sully, to compliment M. de Savoye on his warlike humour; and to assure him of the sympathy and friendship of France. The envoy was empowered to consult the duke de Nemours; and to test, as far as lay in his power, the sincerity of the duke of Savoye. Rumours had reached the court of France, that the overture was a trap laid by the Madrid government; and that in reality, Philip and his brother-in-law were on terms of amity, which was proved by the magnificence of the gifts presented to the two princesses of Savoy on their recent marriages with the princes, heirs of Parma and Mantua.

The negotiation at the Hague, during these transactions, continued its tedious course. The Dutch States-general alone showed sincerity in the effort to attain the end of the conference. The archdukes instructed their envoy to demand full and free toleration for the Roman Catholic faith within the Seven Provinces—an article

which was negated by acclamation. Philip commanded his plenipotentiary to work for the conclusion of an armistice only; and to frustrate the design of a general peace on the basis of the recognition of the independence of the revolted provinces. M. Jeannin wrote, in despair on these cabals, to his royal master; and implored him to set the example of decision and sincerity, by concluding a separate league, offensive and defensive, with the States, to which his majesty was earnestly solicited. Jeannin stated that such intimation of the king's opinion and future intentions might overawe much vexatious opposition; and would probably induce the king of England to issue instructions to his ambassadors no longer to foment the indecision of prince Maurice and his adherents, who wished to wrest the treaty by the sword's point from Spain, rather than by negotiation. Jeannin's advice seemed politic to Henry and to his minister. The project of this league had been discussed during the early months of the year 1608, as a means to compel Philip III. and the archdukes to grant the peace so ardently desired: and, by the advice of Jeannin, the alliance was now ratified, and proved as efficacious as had been anticipated.¹ The Spanish minister, meantime, aware that the

¹ De Thou, *Hist. de son Temps*, vol. 15, edit. de Londres.

Provinces, without the aid of France, must be compelled eventually to accept a peace dictated by his Catholic majesty, and perhaps alarmed at the coldness and hostility of the court of Savoy, determined to despatch a solemn embassy, in order, as he hoped, to forestall the foes of Spain, by offering the alliance and amity of the "great monarchy" to Henri Quatre. This mission was intrusted to don Pedro de Toledo, marquis de Villafranca and de Mancera, constable of Castile, and viceroy of Galicia. The suite of a grandee of such quality, and who was, moreover, remotely related to queen Marie,¹ was regal in magnificence. Don Pedro was attended by six noblemen of the highest quality; and by fifty gentlemen, cavaliers of note. The extraordinary arrogance of this ambassador, and his appreciation of his master's dignity, passed as a byword at the courts of Europe. It was don Pedro who first uttered the well-known boast—"One Deity in heaven—God Almighty. One king upon earth—Don Felipe of Spain!" Don Pedro arrived at Fontainebleau on the 19th of July 1608, whither he

¹ The grandmother of queen Marie, the grand-duchess Eléanore, was a princess of the house of Toledo, and daughter of Don Ferdinand de Toledo, viceroy of Naples, and first cousin to the duke of Alba. The king said, "que Don Pedro a reputation d'être fort sage et advisé seigneur, plein de modesté et de courtoisie."—Lettre à M. de Montmorency.

was conducted by M. d'Alincour and by the marshal de Brissac. The following day Henry granted him audience in state becoming the dignity of the occasion. The king sat under a canopy, attended by the chief cavaliers of his realm. Don Pedro, on approaching the throne, threw himself at the royal feet; and after the performance of this distasteful homage, rose, and placed his hat on his head; which, after the lapse of a few minutes, he again removed in compliment to the French cavaliers, who stood around their master bare-headed. From the presence of the king, Don Pedro proceeded to visit queen Marie, who received the ambassador with condescension. Around her majesty stood the noblest women of the realm, and the ambassador and his retinue were dazzled by the beauty of many of the ladies. The bright eyes of Mesdemoiselles de Montmorency, de Balzac, and de Vendôme, seemed especially to fascinate the cavaliers. The ambassador, after taking leave of the queen, received an invitation from king Henry to walk out with him. After displaying the beauties of his favourite abode, Henry asked the marquis, "whether he thought that a more commodious and superb palace could be erected?" "Sire," replied the proud Spaniard, "your palace is unique; one high personage, nevertheless, might complain that the splendour and convenience of his abode was neglected." "To whom do you refer?" inquired Henry.

“Sire, in my opinion, the worst lodged personage in this mighty palace is God!” “We Frenchmen, monseigneur,” hotly replied his majesty, “enshrine God in our hearts, and not as you Spaniards only do, between four walls! Don Pedro, do you not perceive that my design is not yet carried out? My intention is not to leave this chapel in its present unfinished condition,” added Henry, more courteously.¹ The day following, July 21st, the ambassador had his first political audience. Of the nature of his proposals great doubts have until recently existed; a letter from Henry himself² to his ambassador in Rome, however, which has lately come to light, gives minute details of the wary attempts of the Spanish cabinet, to neutralise the anticipated hostility of France. The ambassador opened the conference by bitterly reproaching the king for the last league which he had signed with the States of Holland, in direct contravention of the articles of Vervins. Henry sharply replied, that the intrigues of the Spanish cabinet rendered necessary such a measure of self-defence; but that, had it been otherwise, the aid which the Dutch afforded him in his adversity, with the loans advanced to him by the States, he should simply have returned in his prosperity, as in honour

¹ *Mercurius Francicus* (Siri), p. 253, et seq. — *Le Grain*, liv. 1. — *Hist. de Henri IV. ou Décades de Henri le Grand*.

² *Lettre du Roi à M. de Breves*, Bibl. Imp. MS. F. Béth. 8955. — *Lettres Missives*, t. 7.—Berger de Nivrey.

bound. Spain, however, had upholden M. de Savoye in his past dishonourable attempt to evade the treaty signed in Paris. Not content with this breach of friendship, king Philip had promoted rebellion in France, seduced some of the most illustrious amongst the nobles, and in foreign affairs—especially in his dealings with the English court—his Catholic majesty had thwarted and defamed the policy of France in a manner which challenged strong indignation. Henry then defended his policy; and stated that the king of Spain, not being able to defeat and subdue his “rebels of the Seven Provinces,” ought to extol his recent league with the Dutch, as affording his majesty an honourable and unanswerable plea for granting the pacification he could no longer withhold. When his majesty ceased to speak, Don Pedro abruptly proposed that a league offensive and defensive should now be concluded between the crowns of Spain and France, cemented by the betrothal of the dauphin to an infanta of Spain; and that of the prince of Asturias to Madame Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the king. Moreover, that the second son of his Catholic majesty should be affianced to Madame Christine of France; in favour of which marriage the king of Spain would settle the succession of the Low Countries, on the demise of the archduke Albert and his consort, on his said son and his posterity. “In short,” writes Henry,¹ “the Spaniard pro-

¹ Bibl. Imp. MS. F. Béthune, 8955. Lettres Missives, t. 7.

posed that I should abandon the said United Provinces to the arms of their king and the archduke, to merit and earn the honour of the said alliances. I replied, that the king of Spain could not expect me to sully my honour by an unworthy act—such as to break my faith with the Dutch to obtain the said alliance : that the deed would be a cowardice likely to render the marriages infamous and miserable.” The Spanish cabinet had three important objects to gain in winning over the king :—the power to deal with Maurice and the States of Holland at pleasure ; the neutrality of the king in all foreign questions affecting their dominion ; and the defeat of the projects nourished by the duke of Savoye, to eject Fuentes from the Milanese. Henry, however, wisely decided that the duties, policy, and engagements of the time present were more to be regarded than an uncertain future, dependent on the marriages of children, all of whom were yet in their cradles. This political conference seems to have been the only one vouchsafed by the king ; at least, no minutes are extant of further interviews. Don Pedro accompanied the king to Paris, where he sojourned for a few days. The defeat of his proposals did not improve the temper of the irascible Spaniard ; who took occasion, upon every civility shown him, to demonstrate contempt for France and the French. When queen Marie sent a chamberlain with a friendly message, in which she graciously recognized his kinship to the Medici, on the day previous to his

departure from Paris, Don Pedro churlishly replied: "Thank her majesty for her gracious condescension; nevertheless, say to her from me, that kings and queens have no relatives; they have only subjects,—at least, such alone should she acknowledge."¹ Great was the jubilee when the ambassador and his magnates departed. The courtiers then concentrated their attention on the approaching mission of the duke de Nevers to Rome, to compliment pope Paul on his elevation to the throne; and to pay the homage due to his holiness from the eldest son of the Church. This embassy is almost the most magnificent on record in French chronicles. The wealth and illustrious birth of the ambassador, and the prestige of favour and piety which attended him, invested his mission with unusual interest. The duke was accompanied by the duchess, his wife, "who elected to attend her husband, without, I may say, requesting permission." In the correspondence between Henry and Madame de Verneuil, Madame de Nevers is constantly made the victim of their wit. She is mentioned by the king under the *sobriquet* of *la lézarde*; and by Madame de Verneuil as *la couleuvre*,—and her conduct appears to have been vigilantly criticized by her ribald detractors. Henry never forgave the repulse which he had received from this lady; and continued to assail her with petty persecutions whenever she gave him opportunity.

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp. Fontanieu, 450-1, 8477.

The year 1608 closed with more domestic prosperity for the king than he deserved. Madame de Verneuil, appeased by her recall to Paris, and by the departure thence of Madame de Moret,¹ and of the duchess de Nevers, resumed for an interval that amiable *enjouement* of manner which Henry found irresistible. After the catastrophe which was soon to close the career of the king, there were persons who spoke suspiciously of this sudden reconciliation; and also of the intimate *liaison*, which dated from this period, between Henriette and the dukes de Guise and d'Epernon, and M. Concini,—personages, all them devoted adherents of queen Marie. The queen herself, also, suddenly abjured her jealousy of Madame de Verneuil; and commanded herself so far even as to address Henriette in public, to the extreme amazement of king Henry, and of his faithful minister. “My wife asked me yesterday for news of your son, as she thought that you would feel much alarmed at his illness. She was quite calm when she put the question; hitherto she has never mentioned you, without vivid suffusion in the face,” writes Henry at this date, to his mistress.² Again, writes his majesty, “M. de Bonnenil, who arrived here this morning, began to speak to the queen about my recent journey to see you at Verneuil. She

¹ Madame de Moret died in 1651—ayant pris du sublimé pour du crystal mineral. She espoused, after the death of the king, the marquis de Vardes.

² Bibl. Imp. MS. Bibl. de l’Arsenal. MS. Hist. 179.

stopped him short, saying, ‘The king is master of his own actions; I do not wish for such information.’ I believe that in so acting the queen follows the advice of M. de Sully, who counselled her to forbid the subject to be mentioned in her presence.”¹ Another day Henry subjected his wife’s forbearance to a ruder ordeal, by placing in her hands a letter he had just received from Henriette; and asking her majesty’s advice on a request made therein. The king, in a letter to Madame de Verneuil, relates thus this incident :—“*Mon cher cœur*,²—I showed your letter last night to my wife, and asked her advice on the answer which I should send you. I looked at her earnestly, in order to observe whether she showed signs of emotion while she was perusing it, as I had perceived in bygone times when I even mentioned you. She replied, without the least perturbation, that I was master to act as I pleased; but that it appeared to her that I ought to give you the satisfaction which you desired. During the remainder of the evening, the queen was merry; and voluntarily spoke to me several times of you, laughing, and observing, ‘that if the princess de Conty had seen her read your letter, she would have been much vexed in mind; for that the said princess tormented herself so much about trifles, that she was not astonished at her extreme leanness of person.’” The request made by Madame de Verneuil related to her children,

¹ Ibid.² Ibid.

whose company she asked permission to have for some days. Henry had shown himself inflexible in separating Henriette and her children, from the period of her arrest. M. de Metz and his sister Gabrielle were consigned to the care of Madame de Montglât, at St. Germain; who had written instructions from her royal master never to permit Madame de Verneuil to see the children, unless authorized by an order under his own hand. The king, therefore, granted the indulgence solicited by his mistress; and desired her to send her coach to St. Germain to convey the children to Chaillot, to the country-house of M. de Roquelaure, where she might enjoy their society for some days. M. d'Entragues, the father of la Marquise, with his wife, remained at Marcoussy under *surveillance*. The same restriction was imposed relative to Henriette's intercourse with her father,—that she could only see him after she had solicited and obtained an order from the king. M. d'Auvergne, her brother, was still a prisoner in the Bastille; all persons being rigidly denied access to his chamber, except his wife, who visited him once a week. The count, to whom incarceration was torture, fell ill about this period of bilious fever; and, on becoming convalescent, he sent to implore permission to change his abode. The petition was presented by M. de Montmorency; and seconded by the entreaties and tears of Madame de Verneuil. The king, however, refused to grant greater indulgence to M. d'Auvergne

than permission to transfer his prison chamber for a given period from the Bastille to the strong tower of the Arsenal; which, as it commanded the long walk of the fortress garden, enabled Auvergne to view from his loophole the daily promenades of the great minister, M. de Sully.

The rigid exactions of the latter in the matter of finance created much murmuring during the summer of the year 1608. Participating in all the secret plans and projects of his royal master, Sully perceived that the spirit of the king thrilled with martial ardour; and that he longed for a propitious opportunity to cast aside his domestic trammels, for the dangers and glory of the battle-field. To fill the money coffers of the Arsenal, the Bastille, and the Hôtel de Ville, therefore, against this contingency of war, became the absorbing project of Sully. Various and subtle were the acts to which he resorted to diminish the hoards of treasure accumulated by the king's loving subjects. "Our minister, who united extreme vigilance with much harshness, worked continually to amass large sums to equip armies: daily, therefore, he originated new systems of taxation, and schemes, the injustice of which dishonoured the government. Amongst other expedients, he caused a commission to be issued inquiring into the manner in which the farmers of the revenue had discharged their functions, and to examine and test the accuracy of their reports." The odium of this measure evoked such manifes-

tations of discontent—for no limit had been placed to this retrogressive inquiry, which involved the reputation of some of the most influential families of the realm—that the king was earnestly counselled by Villeroy to withdraw, or to modify the obnoxious edict. Many noted financiers, nevertheless, were cited before a tribunal, to account for the mode in which they had amassed their wealth; some were fined, others condemned for non-appearance; again, others received private admonitions to present stated sums to the treasury, to make up the alleged deficit in their accounts. Zamet and MM. de Gondy, escaped examination by the favour of the court; a partiality which increased the indignant murmurs of the nation. At length it was wisely proposed to arrest the inquiry, to annul the decrees of the tribunal, and to dissolve the commission, provided that the sum of a million of livres was subscribed by MM. des Finances, and paid into the treasury—which bribe sufficed to allay the hungry hankering of Sully to reduce still further his old enemies the financiers of the realm.¹ Two other important edicts were at this period promulgated; the one forbade duels, under severe penalties; and commanded that aggrieved persons should lay their cases for redress either before the king, the council of the seven marshals of the realm, or the lieutenants of the province in which

¹ Journal de Henri IV. De Thou, vol. 15. Dupleix.

the complainant lived, according to the rank and influence of the latter. The penalty for the violation of this edict was degradation from nobility; confiscation amounting to half the substance of the offender; with perpetual imprisonment in cases when a man slew his adversary. To such a frightful extent did the system of duelling prevail, that Henry thought himself compelled to add to the decree a record, in which he solemnly bound himself not to pardon convicted culprits. "No, not even at the earnest prayer and solicitation of the queen our consort." The third edict related to the union to the crown of Henry's hereditary domains and principalities. The ancient law of France provided that upon the demise of a sovereign, the fiefs, dominions, and possessions of his successor became integral parts of the domains of the crown, as if they had never been separated therefrom; and subject to the law which forbade the king to alienate crown domains, except with and by the consent of the parliament of his realm, and finally of the States General. On the accession of king Henry, he issued an edict declaring the principality of Bearn, Lower Navarre, the duchy of Vendôme, and other fiefs, independent of this law; and subject to his disposition and bequest, as if he had never ascended the throne. The parliament of Paris peremptorily refused to ratify this decree; or to allow that any deviation from the ancient custom might be sanctioned in favour of Madame, even

though the king had then no children. The attorney-general took the occasion of the birth of Henry's third son, to urge upon his majesty the propriety of compliance with this ancient law of France. The king agreed to its expediency; and gave an edict accordingly, declaring his hereditary domains incorporated for ever with the crown. Henry excepted only the duchy of Vendôme, which his majesty settled on César-Monsieur; though still reserving for the crown a sovereign right to nominate to military and ecclesiastical offices within the limits of the appanage.¹

The duke de Nevers, ambassador extraordinary sent to Rome by the king, meanwhile made his entry into that city on the 26th of November. The cavalcade was superb, and comprehended the principal members of the Sacred College, including the pope's nephews. His holiness witnessed the procession from a balcony of the Vatican. The duke de Nevers received the same evening the compliments of the cardinals, and chief Roman nobility seated on a throne, the cushions of which were embroidered with *fleurs-de-lis*, and the ciphers of king Henry. By his side sat Madame de Nevers, "*la coulouvre*," resplendent with diamonds. The following day Nevers was escorted to the Vatican, with a pomp which seems to have been especially gratifying to the French court. The ambassador,

¹ De Thou. La Force.

who was young and martial-looking, rode on horseback to the Vatican: his spurs, stirrups, and the bit and bridle of the horse, were of fine gold; and his saddle a gorgeous affair of gold cloth, besprinkled with gems. The habit of the duke was black satin, embroidered with jet, and gold; he wore the collar and badge of the St. Esprit in diamonds, and his hat was looped with diamonds.¹ Pope Paul gave gracious reception to so splendid an ambassador; who, besides being the representative of the Christian king, was a Gonzaga and heir-presumptive to the duchy of Mantua. The duke had no political mission: he formally introduced the new French resident ambassador, Savary Marquis de Brèves—a statesman whose solid acquirements were an honour to the age in which he lived. M. de Brèves replaced M. d'Alincourt, the son of Villeroy, who had also ably served French interests during his official residence in Rome. M. de Nevers made sojourn in the papal capital for three days only; he was magnificently entertained at a banquet given by the cardinal Borghese, who then submitted, for the duke's admiration and advice, the plans of the superb palazzo in the Campo Martio, upon the

¹ Entrée solennelle du très illustre et très magnanime prince Charles de Gonzague de Clèves, duc de Nevers et de Réthelois, le 25 Novembre. MS. Bibl. Imp. Fontanieu, 450-1, 8077. L'Inventaire Général de l'Histoire de France, t. 1, p. 293, et seq. De Thou, vol. 15.

foundation alone of which his eminence eventually spent 200,000 crowns.¹

The year 1608 closed with the consolatory prospect of peace. The negotiations at the Hague were prospering, owing to the friendly offices and firmness of Henri IV. The archdukes withdrew their demand for the toleration of the Roman Catholic faith throughout the territory of the Seven Provinces; and "consented to treat with a free and independent government." The Franciscan Neyen,² returned from Madrid with the cheering intelligence that king Philip no longer insisted on excluding these rebel subjects of the crown of Spain from traffic with the Indies: but for reasons of state, not necessary to be particularised, his Catholic majesty wished that no especial stipulations relating to commerce with India should be inserted in the articles. Philip condescendingly added, that the intercession and request of their imperial highnesses the archduke and the infanta, alone induced him to suspend his military operations in the Low Countries; or to give his royal ratification to the truce about to be negotiated. The conferences were, nevertheless, prolonged until the 9th day of April 1609. The *Pacta Conventa*, as the convention was termed, consisted of thirty-eight articles: these were

¹ *Ibid.*

² Jean de Neyen—Commissaire général de l'Ordre de St. François aux Pays Bas. Neyen was one of the deputies sent to represent the archdukes at the Hague.

signed by the ambassadors of France and England, by Spinola, marquis de Venafro, by Richardot, Louis de Verreyken, Juan Mancicidor, secretary to Don Felipe III., by Father Neyen, by the count de Nassau, and by eight noble members of the States-General of the United Provinces. The truce was to last twelve years; during which there was to be a total cessation of hostilities between the king of Spain, the archdukes, and the States of Holland. Henry gained great glory by the conclusion of this long deferred peace: the king's virtuous rejection of the tempting offers of Spain, proposed through Don Pedro de Toledo; and the admirable dexterity evinced by Jeannin throughout the negotiation, in allaying the animosities of parties, and in suggesting a middle course of action, likely to win concession—greatly redounded to the fame of that astute personage, and to the honour and repute of the French Cabinet.



BOOK IX.

CHAPTER I.

1609.

The year 1609—Charlotte Marguerite de Montmorency—Her early youth and education—Her betrothal to the marquis de Bassompierre—Admiration of the king—Rupture of the engagement between Mademoiselle de Montmorency and Bassompierre, and her betrothal to the prince de Condé—Details—Infatuation of the king—Marriage of the duke and duchess de Vendôme—Fêtes at Fontainebleau—The princess de Condé and the king—Affairs of the duchy of Clèves and Juliers—Political consequences—Proposals of the court of Savoy—Negotiations of the duke de Nemours—Embassy of M. de Bullion to Turin—Terms of the treaty between the courts of France and Savoy—Alliance against the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs—Domestic life of M. and Madame de Condé—Their feuds—Conduct of the young princess—Altercation between the king and the prince de Condé—Details—Correspondence of Condé with the duke de Bouillon—Letter of the king to Condé—Condé prohibits

his consort from seeing the king—Stratagems resorted to by King Henry to visit Madame de Condé—Frantic jealousy of the prince—He resolves to leave the realm—Retires to Muret—His flight accompanied by the princess—Details—Rage of the king—He commands a pursuit, and the arrest of Condé—Summons his ministers—Their counsels—Advice of the duke de Sully.

THE year 1609 was an eventful year for France and for her king—eventful, inasmuch as the incidents which absorbed and convulsed the court of Henri Quatre, produced abroad sensations of profound disgust and amazement. The hero of the century rested from the toils of war; but meantime the attention of Europe was occupied with the details of his unworthy conquests over some of his fairest subjects; and by the disastrous sequel of retribution which befell him and the realm. The object, now, of Henry's lawless pursuit was Charlotte Marguerite de Montmorency, the young and lovely daughter of the constable, and the betrothed bride of M. de Bassompierre. France contemplated in bewilderment the aberrations of her good king: Sully mourned in secret; while the fury of the queen surged, and was far too intense to break forth, as usual, into invective. Mademoiselle de Montmorency, for a personage so exalted, had lived a life of great seclusion, and on rare occasions had graced the festivities of the Louvre. Her aunt, Diane de France, duchesse d'Angoulême, with whom

she lived, was infirm, and unwilling, in the decline of life, to associate with the profligate court; her father, M. de Montmorency, lay under suspicion of disloyal practices; he was besides a martyr to gout, and was at this period engaged in a suit against his newly-married wife and her relatives. Madame d'Auvergne, the elder sister of Made-moiselle de Montmorency, had withdrawn from the world pending the incarceration of her husband in the Bastille; while the beautiful duchesse de Ventadour, another daughter of Montmorency, presided with her husband over a distant province of the realm. At the commencement of the year, queen Marie, to celebrate her reconciliation with her royal husband, had commanded a ballet of extraordinary splendour in which the loveliest young women of the court were to figure.¹ Marie appeared as Diana; and selected Made-moiselle de Montmorency and seven other illustrious maidens to follow in her train as attendant nymphs. The ballet was several times privately rehearsed in the queen's saloon. On one of these occasions the king passed the door of the apartment on his way to the council-chamber, attended by Bellegarde, and by M. de Montespan, captain of the body-guard. Hearing the sounds of

¹ The ballet was named by the queen—"Le Ballet des Nymphes de Diane," and was performed in the great hall of the Louvre, January 16, 1609.

merriment, music, and laughter, he opened the door, and stood for some minutes looking on the scene. Mademoiselle de Montmorency, in her girlish glee, perceiving the king, pironetted towards him, and brandishing her dart, aimed it at his majesty's heart; then bending the knee in obeisance, she retreated to her place. Her gesture, beauty, and tasteful dress inflamed the fancy of the king—an approbation heightened when, on the same evening, he beheld the ravishing manner in which Mademoiselle de Montmorency acquitted herself when the ballet was danced in public, and heard the applause which her performance elicited from the assemblage.¹ Suitors of every rank and degree sought the alliance of the chief of Montmorency, and prayed for the favour of so lovely a maiden. The constable, however, was angered and wearied by these solicitations; he dismissed his petitioners, and intimated that he had views of his own for the disposal of his daughter's hand. The favoured personage on whom Montmorency's good-will centred was M. de Bassompierre,—a choice which excited wonder and speculation. The family of Bassompierre ranked amongst the *noblesse* of Lorraine of the second class; his father, Chris-

¹ Vie de Madame la Princesse—Tallemant des Réaux—Hist. 16. Vie de Charlotte Marguerite de Montmorency—Dreux du Radier. Sauval.

topher de Bassompierre, was a cadet of his house ; and commenced his career as page to Charles IX., king of France. He afterwards entered the service of the duke de Guise, and aided him in organising the wars of the League. Christopher de Bassompierre married Louise de Radeval, a niece of the marshal de Brissac ; his eldest son Francis, was born in 1579, at the castle of Harouel, in Lorraine. The youth of M. de Bassompierre was spent in Germany, under the guardianship of his mother ; as his father did not long survive the catastrophe of Blois, and the assassination of his patron, M. de Guise.¹ In 1598, Bassompierre made his first appearance at the court of Henri Quatre. The proud aristocracy of the realm looked down on this young aspirant for royal favour. Bassompierre was one of the handsomest men of the age ; he was witty, amiable, gallant, and good-tempered. He was accomplished as a cavalier ; and danced to perfection. To defend himself and his honour, Bassompierre knew how to use his sword : his manners were insinuating ; and the first of his triumphs at court was to win the favour of Gabrielle d'Estrées, which became the foundation of his fortune. Subsequently, this lucky cavalier succeeded in captivating the good will of Marie de Medici, without losing the favour

¹ Journal de ma Vie—Bassompierre.

of the king, in whose good graces he was always paramount. Bassompierre loved splendour—magnificent in his attire; liberal in his donations to others; welcomed, after an interval, by the great and wealthy nobles as an equal—though in reality poorer than many of their retainers—Bassompierre lived a merry and prosperous life, maintaining the splendour he loved by his success at the gaming-table; and by the large gifts which came to him from persons who sought and profited by his court influence. At the beginning of the year 1609 a still more brilliant future seemed unfolding for Bassompierre. One day the constable de Montmorency invited him to dinner, in company with the dukes de Roquelaure, d'Épernon, M. Zamet, and a notary of the name of La Cave. The banquet over, Montmorency led the cavaliers to his private cabinet, and suddenly offered the hand of his daughter to Bassompierre. Penetrated with gratitude and astonishment, the latter threw himself at the feet of the constable, and poured forth thanks. M. de Montmorency next stated that the dowry of his daughter would be 100,000 crowns; but at the death of her uncle a further sum of 50,000 crowns would be bequeathed to her. He added, that he gave his daughter to Bassompierre in the full assurance that the marriage would be a happy one; and that he should, in his old age, acquire a son-in-law whom he had loved as a child—"a conviction of

especial comfort, inasmuch as his two elder daughters, though greatly married, did not enjoy much matrimonial felicity." Bassompierre replied in the language of a man dazzled and overwhelmed by the extent of his fortune—and objected only a doubt lest Mademoiselle de Montmorency might feel mortification at abdicating her rank and precedence as a princess, to become the wife of a simple gentleman, of mediocere fortune.¹ Bassompierre then received the congratulations of the persons present: it was then suggested by M. de Roquelaure, that "if M. le Connétable affianced his daughter without previously informing the king, it would be deemed an act of contempt, which his majesty never would pardon; moreover, that the king would nourish such infinite resentment against M. de Bassompierre, as quite to ruin his future fortune at court." Montmorency declared himself convinced by these remonstrances; and though he enjoined for the present general secrecy on the pending event, he permitted Bassompierre to make the communication to the king. Previously, however, the constable took M. de Bassompierre to visit Madame d'Angoulême, and, presenting his daughter to Bassompierre, said: "Mon fils, behold the wife I have in store for you—embrace her." Mademoiselle de Montmorency appears to

¹ Bassompierre—*Journal de ma Vie*.

have made no objection to the alliance, or to her handsome suitor, with whom, probably, she had become captivated. Instructions were without delay given to notaries to draw up the marriage contract; and it was agreed that Bassompierre and the duke de Roquelaure, being in attendance on the following night at the *coucher*, should impart the matter to his majesty. The reason wherefore Montmorency employed intermediate persons to make known to his majesty his intentions relative to his daughter was, that high words had lately passed between Henry and his old friend relative to a marriage proposed by the king between Mademoiselle de Vendôme and Montmorency's son and heir, which terminated in reproaches and alienation. As no adequate reason could be assigned for the constable's choice of M. de Bassompierre as a son-in-law—a cavalier who had neither princely birth nor gifts of fortune to offer to his intended bride, the most beautiful and highly born of the marriageable women of the court—public opinion was soon busy in alleging a variety of motives to account for the unequal choice. It was rumoured that M. de Montmorency, fearing for his daughter's honour—the admiration of the king being unequivocally manifest—sought to select for her a consort not of princely rank; but nevertheless one who possessed sufficient court favour and complaisance of character to combat the difficulties likely to beset him. In

other quarters it was whispered that Montmorency projected this alliance in order thereby to become reconciled to the king; who, he believed, would send for him to expostulate on the inequality of the marriage. Again, it was urged, that the constable, coveting an alliance with the prince de Condé, first prince of the blood, sought to sound the intentions of the king and his nephew, by a pretended announcement of the approaching union of Bassompierre with Mademoiselle de Montmorency. When the contemplated alliance, however, was mentioned to the king, he expressed approval of the constable's choice. "The king not only consented to the alliance, but so greatly approved it, that, as a mark of his contentment, he would again, he said, see and be reconciled to M. le Connétable," writes Bassompierre. The king, thereupon, paid several visits to the *fiancée*; and had, moreover, various private interviews with her at the Louvre. Mademoiselle de Montmorency assured the king, "that as her father commanded her so to do, she was well content to accept the suit of M. de Bassompierre." The royal assent having been apparently obtained, the marriage was made public. The anger of Bassompierre's rivals, and the astonishment of the courtiers, were indescribable. The relatives and allies of the Montmorency rose *en masse*, to protest against an alliance so insignificant. The duke de Bouillon waited on the

king, and made haughty and sharp remonstrance. Madame de Verneuil entreated that "the man who had injured her sister, Marie de Balzac, and betrayed her under a promise of marriage, might not be rewarded by so fair a prize." The sons-in-law of the constable, the duke de Ventadour, and M. d'Auvergne, joined in the general protest. Henry, meantime, was himself growing more and more enamoured of the charms and graces of Charlotte de Montmorency; and began to be tormented by fierce jealousy at the anticipation of her union with a man upon whom she was evidently prepared to bestow regard. The friends of the young prince de Condé, meantime, bestirred themselves, and represented to his royal highness that he ought not to permit the alliance with the Montmorency to escape him:—"the king will not permit your highness to make a foreign alliance," said the duke de Bouillon; "there are, therefore, only two ladies in the realm of suitable years and rank to become your consort—to wit, Mademoiselle de Montmorency, or Mademoiselle de Mayenne. In order to espouse this last-named lady you would have difficulty in procuring the royal assent; as the crown has suffered reverses enough from the alliance of Lorraine with the blood-royal?" M. de Condé hesitated; agreed in the observations of his counsellor; promised to demand the hand of the princess; and then shrank from a union with "a lady whom the king had

rendered notorious by his admiration." The young prince was not a favourite at court ; he inherited the peculiarities of manner, the reserve, and the sensitiveness of his father. His sense of personal honour was keen : his habits of life were the reverse of those of the king. He hated intrigue, and loved the pastime of the chase and military occupations better than the luxury of the court, or the smiles of its fairest ornament. In temper M. de Condé was irritable and excitable ; and sometimes discerned offence where none was intended. He showed little tenderness for his mother ; and brooded over the accusation under which Madame de Condé rested, of having been accessory to the assassination of her husband by poison. Officious persons, such as MM. de Roquelaure and d'Épernon, had also been busy in their insinuations to the king, that M. de Bassompierre would probably gain the affection of the lady about to be consigned to him ; and that Mademoiselle de Montmorency was likely to make as faithful a wife as Madame de Nevers. "Give her to M. de Condé ; she will become, sire, a member of your family ; you will daily meet on intimate terms—while M. le Prince, being little influenced by feminine charms, will probably not disapprove of so profitable and pleasant an intercourse," said these wicked tempters. Henry, therefore, at length resolved to persuade Bassompierre to relinquish his pretensions in favour of Condé—

a rival of such superlative rank, whom to yield to would bring no dishonour. Accordingly, very early one morning in the month of March 1609, his majesty sent for Bassompierre, and signing to him to kneel on a cushion by the bedside, the king began by observing, in his most indifferent manner, "that all night long he had been thinking of M. le Marquis (Bassompierre), as he wished him to marry." Bassompierre gaily replied, "that his majesty's wish would ere this have been accomplished, but for the unlucky fit of gout which had laid up M. le Connétable." "No!" replied the king, quickly,—"I was thinking of offering you the hand of Mademoiselle d'Aumale,¹ and of restoring in your favour and person the confiscated title and honours of that house." "But, your majesty, I cannot marry two wives!" exclaimed the astonished Bassompierre. Henry thereupon rose on his pillows, and heaved a deep sigh, tears, at the same time, glistening in his eyes: "Bassompierre, I am going to speak as friend to friend. I am desperately enamoured of Mademoiselle de Montmorency; if you marry her, and she loves you, I shall hate you; if she loved me, you then would hate me. Let us not, therefore, risk the destruction of our

¹ Anne Catherine de Lorraine. She eventually married the duke de Nemours, and died revered for her piety and beneficence in the year 1618. But a very small portion of the confiscated estates of her father the duke d'Aumale were restored to the duchess de Nemours.

friendship ; for, *mon ami*, I care for you and your interests greatly. I have resolved, therefore, to give *Mademoiselle de Montmorency* to my nephew the prince de Condé, and so to introduce her into my own family. She will become the consolation and solace of the old age now before me. I will give my nephew an income of 100,000 francs ; he prefers hunting to the society of ladies. I desire nothing more from *Mademoiselle de Montmorency* but her regard ; I neither pretend nor covet more !” The surprise and consternation of *Bassompierre* was intense : after a few moments he recovered his presence of mind to calculate what answer it would beseem him to make. “I reflected,” writes the subtle courtier, “that the king was all-powerful ; and that, despite of my protests, he could, and doubtless would, take away from me *Mademoiselle de Montmorency* ; and that by the imprudence of an ungracious refusal to submit to his command, I ran the risk of ruining my fortunes, as well as of incurring the certain loss of my lady-love. I therefore replied :— ‘that I had always passionately longed for an opportunity of evincing my gratitude and devotion to his majesty,—that the sacrifice was now adequate, of so great an alliance, so beautiful a lady, and of a passion on my part so sincere. Yes, sire ; I renounce the alliance ! and I pray that this your new attachment may bring you felicity and content, as great as is my distress and

present disappointment—although my sorrow is mitigated by the consideration that it is incurred for your majesty's satisfaction.”¹ The king then embraced Bassompierre; assured him of his favour, and that he would provide for him “bountifully, as he had done for his illegitimate children, whom he dearly loved.” Bassompierre attributed his disappointment to the opposition of the duke de Bouillon, whom he had omitted to conciliate or to consult at this crisis of his fate. Henry, a few hours after the interview, sent for the prince de Condé, and a conference ensued. His majesty next despatched a message to the constable de Montmorency, to notify his intentions relative to Mademoiselle de Montmorency. “Say that my daughter, having already a *fiancé*, requires not another. I have already the honour of being great-uncle to M. le Prince, and desire no nearer affinity,” fiercely replied Montmorency, who deemed himself compelled to offer some apparent opposition. The will of the king, however, prevailed: the same evening the alliance was pompously announced. Madame d'Angoulême and the princess Charlotte were favoured by private conferences with the king at the evening reception of the queen. The young princess, on passing Bassompierre, after her audience with Henry, smiled, made a sign, and significantly shrugged her shoulders; which gestures so affected

¹ Journal de ma Vie—Bassompierre, année 1609.

the former that he quitted the Louvre, took to his bed, and remained invisible for several days.

The betrothment of the young couple took place in the great gallery of the Louvre,¹ and the king had the malice, during the ceremony, to lean on Bassompierre's shoulder, and thus compelled him to remain close to the affianced pair. The marriage was subsequently solemnized with great pomp at Chantilly. The king settled an income of 100,000 francs on the bridegroom; his majesty also presented the bride with her wedding robes, which cost 10,000 francs; and the queen gave jewels to the amount of 18,000 francs.² This munificence, and the *éclat* of the marriage and its subsequent events, occasioned endless speculation; the *mauraises langues* of the court sped in evil gossip: all which sinister rumours were magnified tenfold by the rages of the queen, the jealousies and precautions of M. de Condé, and the infatuated conduct of the king. The first public appearance of the princess de Condé after her marriage was at a ball given by queen Marguerite: and the following day the prince received an order to escort his wife to Fontainebleau, where their majesties were about to repair to solemnize the

¹ Bassompierre—*Journal de ma Vie*. The betrothal took place on the 3rd of March, 1609: the marriage was solemnized on the 17th of May.

² *Lettres Missives*, l. 7. Le Roi au duc de Sully—(*Economies Royales*, édit. originale, ch. 32.

marriage of M. de Vendôme with his long-betrothed bride, Mademoiselle de Mercœur.

The solicitude which this marriage caused the king diverted his mind, for a period, from the pursuit of Madame de Condé. After the demise of M. de Mercœur, his widow retired to the seclusion of a cloister. The death of the duchess de Beaufort restored to Madame de Mercœur the guardianship of her daughter. The young heiress, therefore, had been educated in the convent of the Capucines of the Rue St. Honoré, founded by the bequest of the late queen-dowager Louise de Lorraine. The religious education of the princess had been undertaken by le Père Cotton; who, in his weekly visit to the convent, brought such alarming reports of the life and morals of the young duke de Vendôme, that Françoise at length came to shudder on hearing the name of her betrothed lord. When Mademoiselle de Mercœur reached the age stipulated by the marriage contract drawn at Angers in 1596 for her union with César-Monsieur, her reluctance and dread of the alliance seemed insurmountable. Under various pretexts the marriage had been delayed until the summer of the year 1609, when Henry insisted on the performance of the contract; or threatened the duchess de Mercœur with a legal process, and the forfeiture of the sum of 200,000 francs, as stipulated by the contract. Madame de Mercœur replied, "that the king was welcome to take not only the 200,000 francs, but the whole of her

fortune, provided that he permitted her daughter to follow her inclinations." It was believed that alliance with Condé would have been acceptable to Mademoiselle de Mercœur, who was proud of her descent, and despised the royal bastards. Henry, however, had vowed that no princess of Lorraine during his reign should again wed with a Bourbon; he, therefore, after the marriage of Condé, summoned Madame de Mercœur to fulfil the contract, and to bring her daughter to Fontainebleau. The scruples of the princesses were finally overcome by the admonitions of le P. Cotton and of Eric Bishop of Verdun, whom Henry enlisted in the interests of Monsieur; but chiefly by the fear of the proceedings which Henry had finally commanded to be instituted in the name of his son, and the result of which would have placed the fortune and liberty of the duchess and her daughter at the mercy of the king.¹ Madame de Mercœur, therefore, making a merit of necessity, sent for her unwelcome son-in-law, to judge of his mind and manners by personal conference. The young duke, who was of meek deportment, and of handsome face and figure, acquitted himself well under the ordeal; and succeeded in impressing the duchess with a favourable opinion of his piety and propriety of conduct. At the commencement of July, therefore, Madame de Mercœur and her daughter

¹ Mem. de Sully, liv. 25ème. Mem. Hist. de la France. De Coste, Vie de Françoise de Lorraine, duchesse de Vendôme, t. 1.

arrived at Fontainebleau, and took possession of the house once belonging to Madame de Verneuil, which Henry had assigned for their occupation. There M. de Vendôme was a constant visitor, and endured with submissive patience the religious admonitions inflicted on him by his future mother-in-law. Monsieur's character, however, was not to be commended. Cardinal de Richelieu, in his history of the regency of Marie de Medici, says: "The late king always praised the good-nature and conduct of the duke de Vendôme; nevertheless, the evil result of his education was visible to all; and his malice was so well recognized that few writhed under its sting."¹ On the 9th of July, the marriage was celebrated with royal pomp at Fontainebleau. The dress of the bride proclaimed the liberality of the king: she wore a robe of cloth of silver, festooned with strings of pearls, and studded with diamonds,—the magnificence of the dress being displayed by an enormous hoop. The train of her ducal mantle of purple velvet was borne by her sister-in-law, Mademoiselle de Vendôme, whose hand the king wished to bestow on M. de Montmorency. The young princess de Condé followed, attired very sumptuously in a robe of gold gauze over black satin; which costume, it was generally thought, enhanced her loveliness. Queen Marie had promised to be present on this occasion; for César-Monsieur was the only one of

¹ Hist. de la Mère et du Fils.

the king's illegitimate children whom she ever could be persuaded to patronize. Just before the bridal procession set out for the Chapelle de la Trinité, the queen's resolution succumbed before her hate "of the bastards": besides she had vowed never to sanction by her presence any public ceremonial in which the prerogatives of royal rank were conceded to them. Marie, therefore, under pretext of sudden faintness, excused herself from witnessing the nuptial ceremony; but promised, if sufficiently recovered, to grace the evening banquet.¹ Madame de Mercœur remained with her majesty, "as she had long ago abjured secular entertainments, for the peace and seclusion of the cloister." The nuptial benediction was pronounced by the bishop of Paris, the king giving away the bride. The wedding feast was spread in la Salle de la Belle Cheminée, at which queen Marie and her dauphin were present. At the ball the king danced once with the bride, and several times with Madame de Condé, and appeared to be overflowing in spirits and content. For the following three days joustings and running at the ring occupied the cavaliers. Henry was the hero of the games; and won the chief prizes, which he presented to the princess de Condé. "The king, in the aberration of his passion for Madame la Princesse, committed all

¹ Godefroy. *Grand Cérém de France*. Bénédiction Nuptiale de Cesar, duc de Vendôme, et de Françoise de Lorraine, duchesse de Mercœur. t. 2.

kinds of juvenile pranks: he tilted at the ring, and wore perfumed collars, and sleeves of China satin, of the colour *incarnat*; that hue being the one most in favour with '*cette Aurore*,' whose brilliancy inflamed our king."¹ One night, to please his majesty, the princess stood on a balcony with dishevelled hair, and flowing robes, à la Grecque, her figure appearing in high relief from the light of numerous torches blazing in the background. The king surveyed this tableau from the garden below, and was so ravished, or pretended to be so, that the young princess, amazed at his gesticulations, retreated back to her apartment, exclaiming, "*Sainte Vierge! qu'il est fou!*"² Madame de Condé, nevertheless, sat secretly for her portrait by desire of the king. The artist was one Ferdinand, and the picture was executed in chalk. Many years afterwards Madame de Condé, conversing with the artist, asked him the name of the original of the most beautiful portrait which he had ever executed? "It is the name of her, Madame, whose divine

¹ Tallemant des Réaux—*Vie de Madame la Princesse*, t. 1. edit. de Montmerqué.

² *Ibid.* The poet Malherbe thus describes the young princess:

A quelles roses ne fait honte
De son teint la vraie fraîcheur?
Quelle neige a tant de blancheur
Que sa gorge ne la surmonte?
Et quelle flamme huit aux cieux
Claire et nette comme ses yeux?

features were secretly traced by me ; then to render my outline indelible I rubbed the drawing with fresh butter ; for the picture was to be delivered within a given time to M. de Bassompierre !” It is added, that Madame la Princesse had the grace to blush at this reminiscence of the follies of her youth. The festivities at Fontainebleau soon became, as usual, distasteful to the queen. Her uncle, the grand-duke Ferdinand, died in the spring of the year, of dropsy, and a complication of disorders.¹ The queen, who had quarrelled with her uncle throughout his life, made fervid lamentation for his demise, and wished to suspend all receptions and fêtes, until the autumn of the year. Henry, however, who had cordially disliked the grand-duke, insisted that the mourning of the court should not be prolonged beyond the accustomed six weeks. Her majesty, nevertheless, prohibited colours from being worn in her presence until after the expiration of six months. The nuptial festivities of Monsieur and Madame de Vendôme terminated by the presentation to the bride, by Madame de Mercœur, of a magnificent toilette of gold plate ; and of diamonds and other *parures* of the value of 270,000 livres ; all which donations she carefully settled on her daughter and the heirs of the latter.²

During the course of these pastimes, portentous

¹ Hist. del Granducato, lib. 5.

² De Thou—Hist. de son Temps, vol. 15.

events were threatening the peace of Europe. No sooner had war ceased between the Spanish monarchy and its revolted provinces, than public tranquillity was menaced by a fresh outbreak of hostilities in Germany, for the possession of the fair territory which constituted the duchy of Clèves and Juliers. The duke of Clèves, Jean Guillaume, died suddenly at the commencement of the year 1609, without leaving male posterity. The duke had four sisters, married respectively to the duke of Prussia, the count Palatine duke de Neubourg, the duke de Deux-Ponts, and the marquis de Burgaw, son and heir of archduke Ferdinand. The princess Eleanor, duchess of Prussia, died in 1608, leaving one daughter, who had espoused John Sigismund, elector of Brandenburg: this princess, therefore, claimed the disputed duchies, with the intention of ceding them to her second son Ernest, as their undisputed heiress, in right of her mother Eleanor. Anne, duchess of Neubourg, meantime, admitted the rights of her elder sister Eleanor, had she survived to assert them; but disputed the claims of the daughter of the latter—inasmuch as “a sister is more nearly concerned in the inheritance of a deceased brother, than the niece of the latter.” The duke de Deux-Ponts and the marquis of Burgaw maintained the rights of their respective consorts, on the plea that, by an imperial constitution, and the will of Duke William

of Clèves, all the daughters of the latter inherited by turn, to the exclusion of the offspring of any of the sisters. Feuds rose high throughout the duchies; the two princes nearest in succession prepared to assert their respective rights, when the emperor, exercising his power as lord paramount, suddenly sent the archduke Leopold with a strong force to take possession of the disputed territory. The princes of Brandenburg and Neubourg, believing their interests to be menaced by the cupidity of the Hapsburgs, deemed it politic to dissemble, and unite to defeat the designs of the invader. They therefore met at Dormund, and agreed to assume the joint government of the duchies, under the title of the Prince Governors; and to waive for the present their individual claims, until, at a more propitious opportunity, they might invoke Henri Quatre as arbiter. Leopold, meantime, took up his residence at Juliers, and issued edicts forbidding "all persons to aid the princes, or to swear allegiance to one of the daimants or to both, until his imperial majesty should have pronounced on the right of the four princesses co-heiresses, sisters of the deceased duke of Clèves." On learning the reconciliation of the rival princes, and of their joint assumption of rule at Düsseldorf, Leopold advised the emperor to declare them guilty of high treason, and therefore under

ban of the empire.¹ War thereupon seemed inevitable: the princes of Brandenburg and Neubourg appealed to king Henry, to whom they accredited the count de Salms, with orders to represent to his majesty the oppression and ambition of the imperial family, which was perpetually on the alert to aggrandize the Austrian territory, to the detriment of the realm of France; and to remind the king that during the wars of the League, when he also suffered wrong from the overweening ambition of the Spanish Hapsburg, by no allies was he more effectually succoured than by the electoral houses of Brandenburg and Bavaria. To counterbalance this appeal, the archdukes Albert and Isabella, alarmed at the threatening aspect of affairs, despatched an ambassador to king Henry, the famous Richardot, to represent that his imperial majesty had blameless designs in taking possession of the contested duchies, pending the dispute relative to the succession. The disinterested views of Rodolph were further confirmed by an imperial ambassador, the count de Hohenzollern, who journeyed to Paris to confer with the French cabinet. All the royal ambassadors resident in the Protestant States of Germany, nevertheless, confirmed the sinister rumours

¹ De Thou—Hist. de son Temps, vol. 15. Sully, liv. 27ème.

that the duchies were to be annexed to the imperial crown as "*fiefs déchus*." MM. de Vaubecour and Bongars minutely described the condition of public feeling in Germany, which favoured the claim of Ernest of Brandenburg, grandson of the princess Eleanor, duchess of Prussia. The towns of Nuremberg, Strasbourg and Ulm supported his pretensions; as did also the marquis of Baden, and the duke of Wirtemberg. To clip the wings of the Austrian eagle, and to humble the superb Spanish Hapsburgs, had been the ideal of Henry's government. To obtain that triumph he had supported the Dutch in their revolt; concluded strict alliance with England; pardoned the duke of Savoy for his manifold swervings from the ancient alliance between the cabinets of Paris and Turin: patronized the German protestants; conciliated the pope; and supported the petty Italian sovereigns of Parma and Mantua against their rightful liege the king of Spain. So propitious an opportunity for humbling the power obnoxious to Gallic predominance, was not to be neglected by Sully and by his master:—unsolicited by themselves, the hitherto obsequious vassals of the Empire and of Spain, bent the knee and craved protection. Savoy and Mantua were ready to invade that fair Milanese province,—a territory at once a thorn to its possessor, and a bright jewel in his crown. Such an occasion Sully had eagerly coveted; and

for the advent of which the martial ardour, and the resentment of the king had longed. In queen Elizabeth's successor, however, Henry could not hope for the enlightened zeal which animated that great princess. James had neither grievances to avenge nor hatred to assuage against the reigning monarch of Spain. Indeed, the king was too deeply enamoured of the grandeur and conservatism of the Spanish monarchy to aid in the marring of so majestic an edifice; yet, for many reasons, his neutrality might be relied on. Henry, therefore, accepted his opportunity: he despatched an ambassador to Turin, to renew the projected alliance for the liberation of the Milanese from the iron rule of Fuentes; while he accredited M. de Boissise to the German princes, to attend the conference about to be holden at Halle between the friends and allies of the dispossessed princes, Ernest of Brandenburg, and Wolfgang of Bavaria. The ambassador, in his sovereign's name, offered to furnish as many more troops as the princes and their allies could bring into the field: this number was computed at 8,000 infantry, 2,200 horse, and 15 pieces of artillery. The ambassador remarking, that the frontier of France was likely to be assailed by Spanish troops, in retaliation for the succours afforded, the princes engaged to send 4,000 foot and 2,000 horsemen to the aid of the king. Henry also promised to defend the country of Montbéliard for the duke of Wirtemberg, during the war. His ambassador

was likewise instructed to represent before the assembled princes, that their dominions would never be safe while imperial power remained in the hands of the Hapsburgs ; that the king had, therefore, resolved to help them to break so galling a yoke : that the Dutch were his true allies ; and that the king of England would eventually join the league at his majesty's solicitation : finally, that the peace and prosperity of Europe demanded that the empire should accept a new dynasty. The treaty was signed by the duke de Deux-Ponts, his brother Frederic elector palatine, the marquis of Baden, by Joachim Ernest marquis of Brandenburg, by the duke of Wirtemberg, Christian prince of Anhalt, and by Wolfgang count palatine of the Rhine. Henry ratified the treaty, by appending his sign-manual on the 24th day of February, 1609.¹

The king of Spain, meanwhile, in the hope of averting a war, deprecated by his ministers as ruinous—for the finances of Spain were exhausted, and the Cortès no longer voted taxes with the alacrity evinced by that august assemblage before the rich and fertile provinces of the Low Countries became alienated—made some feeble efforts at conciliation. He despatched an envoy to Henry, to deprecate his interference in the matter of Clèves and Juliers ; and offered to refrain himself from intervention in the affair, provided

¹ De Thou—Hist. de son Temps, vol. 15. Sully, liv. 27ème. Dupleix—Mezerai.

that his Christian majesty would give the same pledge of neutrality. "Tell your master that I am not the man to recede from a decision maturely taken!" responded Henry. "I am not ignorant nor deceived as to the ulterior objects of the emperor and of his archdukes. I am resolved to maintain the rights of the princes, whom it is sought to ruin!" To the duke of Savoy his Catholic majesty offered the hand of one of his daughters for the prince of Piedmont; and, as a mark of present grace, he conferred upon the duke's third son the archiepiscopal see of Montreale. The duke, however, was intent upon retaliation for the past insults inflicted on him by his brother-in-law;¹ self-interest, likewise, perpetuated his resentment. "Milan ought to be the heritage of the children of Doña Catalina, my deceased consort,² as her sister Doña Isabel has received the Low

¹ The duke of Savoy had been compelled to send his sons to Madrid as hostages for their father's fidelity to Spanish interests, and to the government of Fuentes in Lombardy. The young prince Philibert Emmanuel had been instructed by Lerma to use the following humiliating words, on his first audience of the king: "Sire, le duc mon père m'envoie ici pour implorer de sa part la miséricorde de V. M., son âge et ses affaires ne lui permettant pas de venir en personne.— Il supplie V. M. de vouloir oublier le passé; et le rétablir dans l'honneur de sa bienveillance, qui lui est plus cher que tout ce qu'il possède au monde!"

² Doña Catalina, youngest daughter of Philip II. and of Elizabeth de Valois.

Countries in heritage by the will of her father—and by the help of my sword, and the might of France, we will have justice done!” said the duke to his confidential friends. The French ambassador, M. de Bullion, was, therefore, made welcome at the court of Turin. He brought the glad tidings that his master was ready to combine with Savoy in an invasion of the Milanese; and that he already had a powerful army on foot to drive the archduke Leopold from Juliers. The king also consented to affiancé his eldest daughter to the prince of Piedmont; and had been pleased to ordain that the dowry of Madame should be equal to that given by Henry II. to his sister Marguerite on her marriage with Emmanuel duke of Savoy,—including the cession by the French crown of the territory annexed by the treaty of Lyons. It was further stipulated that the second son of Savoy should be created a peer of France, by the title of duke de Chartres, with a pension of 150,000 livres;—that the duke’s third son Thomas, should also receive a pension of 90,000 livres; and his fourth son, the cardinal archbishop, a pension of 60,000 livres.¹ In case the duchy of Milan was conquered, and annexed to Piedmont, it was agreed that the duke should cede Savoy to the crown of France as an indemnification for the costs of the intervention: and that the marshal duke de Lesdiguières should assume the

¹ De Thou, vol. 15. Sully. Duplex. Mezerai.

command-in-chief of the armies of France and Savoy.¹ The treaty was negotiated, and ready for the ratification of the high contracting parties by the 13th of November, 1609. The signature of the marriage contract between Madame and the prince of Piedmont was yet deferred for a few weeks, to allow time for the regulation of minor points, personal only to the betrothed pair. Whilst these matters were in course of negotiation, the rumour of them pervaded Europe. The Protestant communities of Hungary, Bohemia, and Silesia, excited by agents in the pay of France; and exasperated by the persecution to which they were again subjected,—made communication to the princes leagued at Halle, assuring them of aid and co-operation on the outbreak of the projected war. The king of Sweden, also, intimated his sympathy with the movement; and made indirect overtures to the king, to ascertain whether an alliance between his son the crown-prince and one of the daughters of France, would be acceptable to the nation. The detail of these treaties and conferences, though whispered abroad, was not officially declared; indeed, the most scrupulous reserve was maintained. The elation sometimes manifested by the king, while publicly speculating upon his designs, inflicted tortures on the cautious Sully.

¹ De Thou, *Hist. de son Temps*, vol. 15. *Mem. de Sully*, liv. 27^{ème}.

One day when Henry was conversing with the count de Soissons, the cardinals de Joyeuse and du Perron, and MM. de Vendôme and de Sully, the words escaped him, "that he was about to abase to the very earth the houses of Spain and Austria; and so effectually, as to extinguish all rivalry for the future between those dynasties and France!" "I took the liberty, gently, to pull his majesty's cloak before he had quite betrayed our secret. He understood my hint, and stopped short in his discourse with the words—'My memory, my lords, is now so bad, and fails me often: I sometimes forget the nature of our projects, and even the names and appellations of persons and nations.'"¹ This transparent artifice deceived none of Henry's auditors; and the persuasion remained established that the spring of the year 1610 would usher in great events. In the royal mind, nevertheless, despite of Henry's apparent eagerness for battle, there lurked a reluctance to strike the blow which should deliver Europe again to the calamities and vicissitudes of warfare. So wearied and exhausted were the various realms and their potentates by the anarchy of the past half century, that any reasonable demand made by the king would have been conceded. The lust of conquest, however, it was necessary to repulse by the sword. Reluctantly and wearily, therefore, did the nations

¹ *Œconomies Royales*, ch. 33.

of Europe make ready for warfare:—one single proclamation from king Henry, and again from north to south the turmoil of conflict would rage. That defiance was, however, still withheld—it needed strong exasperation to draw it forth; but unhappily a provocation at length arose.

Domestic felicity between the youthful prince and princess de Condé did not flourish; and the aggravating peculiarities of the temper of the prince, his bitternesses and fits of passion, rendered his consort the more susceptible of the indulgence and flattery at all times bestowed by her royal master. Condé, at this period, suspected his mother of favouring the admiration of the king; and scenes of great indecorum occurred. Henry commanded the princess constantly to attend the court circle; and to accompany the queen whenever she made sojourn at the summer palaces. Condé ordered his wife to remain at Chantilly, or at Muret: he forbade her to receive presents from the king; to confer in private with his majesty; or to take part in any of the dances and ballets in vogue at court. On the conclusion of the festivities given at Fontainebleau, on the marriage of César-Monsieur, Condé privately repaired to Paris, accompanied by his physician Ribera, and took up his abode for a few days in the house of a rich merchant, who was a noted partisan of Spain. The prince there displayed the greatest agitation and animosity towards the

king : he maintained that a plot was being concocted to dissolve his marriage with Mademoiselle de Montmorency, and to unite him to Mademoiselle de Mayenne, whom he hated. The vigilant Sully received advices that, by the persuasion of his host, Condé had been induced to send a messenger to the Low Countries, to consult the marquis Spinola. The language and manner of the prince, meantime, towards the king became rude and defiant, to a degree which sorely taxed the royal forbearance. "Mon ami," wrote Henry, to Sully, from Fontainebleau, "M. le Prince has been playing the devil. You would be in a fine passion, as well as ashamed of all the evil things which he says of me. My patience at length will tire out, and I shall tell him my mind. I wish you, therefore, to keep back the payment of the last quarter of the pension which I have granted him. If this does not restrain him, I must adopt other means ; for it is a shame to hear the language which he uses respecting me."¹ The king also wrote to the constable to state, lest the latter should be under misapprehension, that he desired to bestow only the affection and notice of a father upon Madame le Princesse. Condé at length took courage, and spoke to the king, demanding permission to leave the court with his wife, and to reside altogether at his mansion at St. Valery. Henry replied by an absolute refusal. The prince retorted : he reproached Henry with his

¹ *Economies Royales*, ch. 33.

alleged designs relative to the young princess. "Your majesty desires to seduce my wife ; and by that intent you annul all the benefits that your royal generosity conferred upon me in my youth. By the grace of God, I will not submit to such tyranny, nor will I be made the object of the contemptuous pity of your court!" The brave words of the young prince incensed the king, who had lost all sense of justice and honour in the wildness of his infatuation. "Never in the course of my life have I acted as a tyrant, save and except—mark, monseigneur!—that I compelled every one to acknowledge you for what you are *not*."¹ At this ominous hint, which recalled the crime by which the life of the prince's father was terminated, and the horrid suspicions that once had encircled his mother, and which affected his own legitimacy, Condé trembled ; he withdrew from the presence, and returned in haste to Paris, in a condition of pitiable excitement and affliction. The following morning, by the advice of some friend, probably of M. de Thou the historian, the prince called upon Sully to impart his anxieties and resolves. "The prince entered my cabinet with all the signs of extreme mental perturbation on his countenance," says Sully. "He began to recapitulate the wrongs received, and expected, inflicted upon him by the king. I replied," records Sully, "by recalling to him the infinity of obligations which he owed to the king—obliga-

¹ *Mém. pour servir à l'histoire de France*, t. 2.

tions so deep and overwhelming as demanded not only the sacrifice of a fancied grievance, but even of any real injury, which he had yet not incurred." Condé then launched into a general denunciation of the royal plans and intent to work his perdition; and spoke with such bitterness as to tempt the careful Sully from his usual reserve of language. The prince thereupon announced that he had come to the resolve to leave France. Sully responded, "that he could not believe the words of M. le Prince to be serious; or that he could be hurried by resentment to the culpable and senseless excess of betraying his country, his king, his honour, and his duty! That the abode of a prince of the blood was with the court, and that personages of his rank failed in their allegiance when they even made long sojourn in any distant country, without the permission of their sovereign. "I cannot and will not submit to such thralldom; it is becoming neither to my birth, my condition, nor to my honour." In reply to this hasty speech, Sully took his guest to task, and rated him so severely, and withal in so contemptuous a tone, as stung M. le Prince to the quick. He soon after took his departure, and quitted the Arsenal, convinced that his ruin, and dishonour, and arrest impended; and that the king would overwhelm him amid the dark shadows which hung over his birth, rather than fail in his evil design of separating him from Madame de Condé.¹ The prince

¹ Mem. de Sully, liv. 26ème. "La reine et le prince de

had the greater reason for his forebodings, as Madame de Condé, fascinated by the gifts and attention lavished upon her, seemed venturing into perilous risks in the gratitude with which she repaid these benefactions. So angry was the princess at the distraction evinced by her husband, and by the persecution and rebuke to which she was subjected, that she left the hôtel de Lyons,¹ and placed herself under the protection of Madame d'Angoulême,² at Vincennes, a step greatly approved by the king, but which increased the dark suspicions of Condé. At length the constable de Montmorency interfered to reconcile the prince and his wife; and as he perceived that public applause was with Condé, whose spirited contest with his royal master had greatly raised him in the opinion of all personages of honour, he obtained permission for the prince to take his wife to make a sojourn of three weeks at the château de Breteuil. The princess, much against her will, was compelled to obey: her reluctance being increased when she found that the dowager-princess of Condé was to accompany her. Henry visited Vincennes to console the young beauty for

Condé, que cette affaire touchoit de plus près, echauffés par tous les discours qu'on ne cessait de leur souffler, eurent bientôt mis toute la cour en rumeur. Tous mes soins furent inutiles auprès de la reine, véritablement furieuse." Ibid.

¹ Condé resided at this period at the Hotel de Lyons.

² Madame d'Angoulême was the aunt of Madame de Condé, by whom she had been educated.

her temporary exile ; while the queen encouraged her submission by the promise that at her approaching *accouchement*, she would summon her to be present at the event of her delivery, in accord with the prerogative and duties of a princess of the blood. M. le Prince recovered his serenity in his retreat at Breteuil ; and, it appears, attempted to console his young wife by the most considerate treatment. His sense of his wrongs, however, and his fears for the future, remained undiminished ; and, while at Breteuil, he formed the resolve that Madame de Condé should never again endanger his honour, and her own reputation, by her residence at the Louvre. To his friend and kinsman, the duke de Bouillon, Condé first confided his projects. He wrote thus :—

*The Prince de Condé to the Duke de Bouillon.*¹

“MONSIEUR,—I believe that in the affair which now occupies me, and in its present aspect, I can only have recourse to you. Know then, monsieur, that having embarked in this marriage of mine by your advice, and you having, as you conceived, happily accomplished such, it nearly concerns you that I should issue with honour in the present conjuncture. To confide to you the true state of affairs,—the king personally invited my wife and myself to be present at the recent nuptials,² to which I agreed ; but not content with

¹ Lettre de Henri de Bourbon au duc de Bouillon, touchant son voyage en Flandre—F. St. Germa. fr, 1019. MS. Bibl. Imp.

² The marriage of the duke de Vendôme.

this deference to his will, his majesty commanded my wife and myself to make our usual abode at court. I excused myself: upon which high words ensued, and the king said that Madame la Princesse was his subject, and that he had the power to command her obedience as well as my own. This I stoutly denied; nor will I flinch from my resolve for any consideration, as God and justice are on my side. My present entreaty to you is—see M. le Connétable, and dispose him to consent to the journey from the kingdom which I meditate, so that afterwards he may not league himself against me, which the king would expect. This fear, nevertheless, shall not prevent me from executing my design, although I should be sorry to grieve that excellent man. Believe, monsieur, that you cannot give me greater evidence of the affection which you promised. Also, pray employ your good offices that the 20,000 livres owing to me (from the treasury), may be paid; though, if still refused, I shall find funds elsewhere. I shall ever remain, monsieur,

“Your affectionate cousin at command,

“HENRY DE BOURBON.”

Sully, meantime, had related to his majesty the words which passed between the prince and himself at the Arsenal; and expressed his conviction that Condé had sufficient audacity, jealousy, and stubbornness to leave the kingdom,—an event which he foresaw, unless the king found means to arrest his intention, by ceasing his pursuit of Madame la Princesse. Henry laughed incredulously; and asked what means M. de Condé had

to support his dignity in a foreign land—neither, he said, could the princess be forced from the realm without an appeal to the crown. The conversation, nevertheless, made a sufficient impression on the royal mind to induce Henry to write thus to the prince, in order to lure him back to Paris:—

*Henri IV. to M. le Prince de Condé.*¹

“MON NEVEU,—You have staid long enough in the country: return, before you are compelled to do so by bad weather, in order that I may thank you. I hear that you complain to everybody about my treatment of yourself; yet I have exhorted you only in the capacity which I possess—as your father, your king, your master, and your benefactor. I should have expected thanks from you rather than the evil speech in which it appears that you abound. You know me well enough to be convinced that the clamour which you make does not move me. I appeal to your mother, and to your father-in-law, and to your uncle, who shall be judges of our quarrel; and if they condemn me,—which my heart does not,—I will satisfy you to the utmost. If you are pronounced to have erred, all the satisfaction that I shall exact from you will be a devotion on your part, equal to the licence which you have given yourself during the last five or six months. On Sunday next, I shall be in Paris; if

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp. F. St. Germain fr. 1019—*Veritable discours de la Naissance et Vie de Monseigneur le Prince de Condé jusqu'à présent*—A lui deslié par le Sieur de Fiesbzun.

you were wise as you are now simple, I would have honoured you by my presence at your next sacrifice to St. Hubert; and would have made your '*gros comte*' drunk—to whom I desire commendations. I hope to find you in Paris on my arrival there. A Dieu, mon Neveu.

“HENRY.”

“P.S.—If Lomenie¹ had been here, he would have provided me with better paper.”

Condé returned the most respectful reply to this epistle, and promised to meet the king in Paris, after the elapse of a few days.² Instead of being accompanied by his wife, as Henry anticipated, Condé escorted her to his château de Muret, close to Soissons, and left her there, under the *surveillance* of her mother-in-law. Under these circumstances, the welcome of M. le Prince at court was not very cordial. This obstruction of his familiar intercourse with the princess irritated the mad passion of the king, already stimulated by the perusal of the letters which “la pauvre prisonnière,” as Madame de Condé termed herself, addressed to her relatives of Montmorency. Henry, therefore, resorted to his old stratagems to gain an interview with *la dame de ses pensées*. He disguised himself with a long beard, and the dress of a royal *piqueur*, and privately repaired to Sois-

¹ Loménie was his majesty's private secretary. The “*gros comte*” was Condé's favourite huntsman.

² MS. S. Germ. fr. 1019. Bibl. Imp.

sons, to be present at a hunt on the domain of Muret, at which the princess was expected to appear.¹ Condé, however, received timely intelligence of the *ruse*; and despatched a gentleman to announce his own presence at the chase; and to caution his mother, should Henry unexpectedly present himself at the château. Finding this expedient unsuccessful, the king adopted another: by inducing a gentleman of the neighbourhood, one M. de Traigny, to offer a fête to the two princesses. The ladies unsuspectingly accepted the entertainment; but, as the young princess was vigilantly guarded by her mother-in-law, his majesty found no opportunity for the ardently-desired interview; but was compelled to be content with watching the progress of the collation through a hole cut in the tapestry hangings of the saloon.² These foolish *escapades* being duly reported with exaggerations to M. le Prince, confirmed him in his resolve to escape the ignominy which awaited him.

The period of queen Marie's lying-in meantime approached; and mindful of her promise to Madame de Condé, her majesty sent for M. le Prince, and requested that his consort might be summoned to Paris for a few days, to perform her duties in the royal chamber, as first princess of the blood. M. le Prince stammered,

¹ Tallement des Réaux.—Vie de Madame la Princesse.

² Ibid.—Vie de Madame la Princesse.

became crimson with emotion, and finally found courage to refuse, with some asperity, the request made to him.¹ The queen made a warm rejoinder; and hinted that, as the health of Madame de Conty was too precarious to admit of her presence at the Louvre at the approaching event, it was possible that the princess of Condé might be authoritatively summoned to perform the functions appertaining to her rank. Condé left the palace in despair: he immediately summoned to conference his chancellor M. de Rochefort, and M. de Virrey, his confidential secretary. To these persons the prince confided his resolve to flee from France with the princess his consort, and take refuge at the court of the archdukes; after placing Madame la Princesse under the protection of his sister and brother-in-law the Prince and Princess of Orange² at Bréda. The king, it was assumed, could take no legitimate offence at a journey which would be spoken of, and announced as a token of fraternal regard offered by the prince, to his only sister; to whom it might be supposed that he wished to intro-

¹ Mem. de la Retraite de Monseigneur le Prince hors du Royaume de France ès années 1609-1610.—Mem. dressé pour être donné à M. le Président de Thou.—Extract tiré du MS. de M. Claude Enoch Virrey, conseiller et secretaire du roy, et premier de Monseigneur le Prince.—MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouhier, vol. 87.

² Eleonore de Bourbon.

duce his beautiful young consort. The prince also took into his confidence one M. de Toiras, who eventually betrayed his master, and served king Henry as a spy on the proceedings of the princess. Condé also did De Thou the honour of consulting him on his project. "Monseigneur," observed the sage historian, "I applaud your resolution; had you, however, consulted me, I could not, consistently with my duty, have encouraged you to this resolve; though I would not have dissuaded you from such. Heroic actions like that which you contemplate should be matured in solitude, announced, and, if possible, achieved!"¹ The prince, fearing lest a royal summons addressed directly to the princess might bring her to Paris before his arrangements were completed, resolved to feign acquiescence in the wishes of the court. He therefore requested Madame Diane de France duchesse d'Angoulême, to wait upon the queen, and to lay at her majesty's feet his sincere apologies for his uncourteous opposition to her commands; and to promise that he would in a few days himself journey to Muret, and escort Madame la Princesse to the Louvre. In the ardour of his dissimulation, the prince disregarded prudence, by calling the same afternoon upon Sully, and,

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouhier, vol. 87. De Thou—Hist. de son Temps, vol. 15, edit. de Londres.

by his amiable and submissive discourse, succeeded in effectually rousing again the suspicion of that astute personage. The duke took the opportunity to read the prince a second lesson on his late undutiful defiance, adding, "that his majesty knew how to quell rebellion in his family: and, if needs be, he, M. de Condé, would not be the first royal prince who had suffered wholesome restraint."¹ Condé departed from the presence of Sully shocked and exasperated at the rude rebuff he had suffered. His agents were meantime diligent in their preparations; money was borrowed by them to the amount of 20,000 francs; and Madame de Roucy, a near kinswoman of Condé, advanced him a further sum of 4,000 crowns. Madame de Condé the dowager princess, was next summoned to Paris by her son: after a conference of a few hours, during which it is doubtful whether the prince divulged his project, he left the capital for Muret; intending, as he publicly declared, to be absent only three days, when he should make permanent sojourn in the capital until after Christmas, with the princess his consort.

The prince quitted Paris on St. Catherine's day, November 25, and arrived at Muret on the evening of the following day. He was greeted submissively by the princess, whose spirit was again buoyant with the hope of a speedy return to the

¹ *Ibid.*

gaities of the capital. Condé, on his arrival, proclaimed a hunt, in which all his officers were to participate; and directed that the nets should be spread for the capture of the boar about three leagues from the château, in the opposite direction to that of his proposed flight. On the 28th, news arrived of the accouchement of the queen, who gave birth to her sixth child, Madame Marie Henriette de France,¹ at the Louvre, on the evening of St. Catherine's Day. The flight of the prince could therefore no longer be safely delayed: the king had now a lawful and plausible pretext for requiring the presence of Condé's wife. On the 29th of November, the personages who were to participate in the pastime of the chase, received instructions to be at the rendezvous by dawn. The prince then carelessly proposed to his consort, that she should grace the sport by her fair presence. Madame readily consented: and at five on the morning of the 29th, was ready attired *en amazone*, with two of her women, Mademoiselle de Certeau, and Mademoiselle Phillipette de Castrauvert. Final arrangements for flight had been concluded during the night by Rochefort and Virrey: at the hour appointed Condé led his wife and her ladies to a coach drawn by eight horses, after having first attended matins in the castle chapel. The prince rode on horseback, accompanied by MM. de Rochefort, Virrey, Mat-

¹ Afterwards the consort of Charles I., king of Great Britain.

thelier, and de Camus—all officers in his suite; also by one Laperrière, a servant of inferior grade, who was to act as guide. The morning was rainy, and no ray of light cheered the departure of the party from Muret. Madame de Condé was in high spirits; anticipating great amusement from the expedition, and laughing merrily at the obstacles which they encountered. After a time the princess began to express wonder at the appointment of so distant a *rendezvous de chasse*; and as daylight dawned she discovered that the route which they were traversing led away from the forest towards which she had supposed they were bound. Madame de Condé thereupon began to weep bitterly; and calling Virrey to the window of the coach, she begged him to tell her whither M. le Prince was proceeding. Her terror increasing at the ambiguous answer given by Virrey, the latter spurred his horse to the side of the prince, and conjured him to confess his destination to Madame. The prince thereupon dismounted, and entered the coach: when seated by the side of his consort, he tenderly revealed the object of their journey; also the place of their destination, which was to the palace of the Prince of Orange at Bréda. The prince, without allowing time for a reply, or even for the tears to flow again from the bright eyes of his astonished consort, quitted the coach, and, mounting his horse, urged forwards the escort with redoubled speed. Madame de Condé wept, and lamented for an interval; she then called Virrey,

and, with a burst of laughter, asked whether “in their fine preparations he had remembered to bring anything to eat? and if so, that she and her ladies would be glad to breakfast.” Being abundantly supplied with refreshment, Madame de Condé, when somewhat recruited, asked to speak again with her husband. She then, with a humility—which was afterwards stigmatized as feigned—thanked M. le Prince for the honour he conferred upon her in making her the partner of his peregrination. She approved and lauded his caution, and care for her repute; and begged to assure him that her ardent wish was to live and to die his humble and faithful consort.¹ Much cheered by these assurances, Condé continued his route towards Coucy. The guide, Laperrière, meantime, discovering that his royal master had reasons to hasten his journey, and that his ultimate destination was mysteriously concealed, bethought himself how he could turn this knowledge to his advantage. It happened that the son of this individual—one of Condé’s forest-rangers—came up with the cavalcade, and accosted his father. As the prince had perfect confidence in Laperrière’s fidelity, the pair were suffered to converse. Laperrière thereupon perfidiously enjoined

1 Relation de M. C. Enoch Virrey—F. Bouhier, vol. 87, MS. Bibl. Imp. MS. F. S. Germ. fr. MS. vol. 1019. De Thou, Hist. de son Temps. Bentivoglio, Fuga de Henrico de Borbone, principe de Condé, etc.

his son to ride post to Paris, to proceed straight to the Louvre, and to warn the king, "that M. le Prince was on his road with Madame la Princesse towards the Flemish frontier." Condé unsuspectingly continued his route, and at nightfall arrived at Coucy. At this place the princess was suffered to repose for an hour; for the carriage, being broken by the rough roads, was pronounced unfit for further use. Condé therefore purchased a pillion, and took up his wife behind him; while the two damsels, her attendants, mounted behind two cavaliers of the suite; and the little company recommenced their flight, *à toute bride* towards the frontier. The night was again dark and stormy: and through the combined afflictions of cold, hunger, and terror, Madame la Princesse was nearly dead when she arrived at Castillon, the first village beyond the frontier of France. "Poor young princess!" exclaims the chronicler, compassionately; "what a change, what a mutation! Instead of finding herself immersed in the pleasures and luxuries of the court, behold her surrounded by the gloom of night, persecuted by wind and torrents of rain, shivering with cold, and bound for a weary land of exile! Oh! what terrors and straits, dear lady, wouldst thou have suffered without the support and loving companionship of that *preux chevalier*, thy tender spouse, whose

company madest thee forgetful of the horrors and sufferings of thy route!"¹

Laperrière, meanwhile, on his arrival in Paris, obeyed the directions given to him. He went to the Louvre, and asked to be permitted audience with the gentleman whose turn it was to attend the royal *coucher*. On this night it happened to be M. d'Elbène, who granted the interview. The king was in his closet, playing at cards with M. de Soissons, Bassompierre, MM. de Cramail, de Cœuvres, and de Loménie. The party was about to disperse when d'Elbène entered, and spoke to the king in a whisper. Henry started, and made a gesture of passion: then he beckoned to Bassompierre. "Mon ami," exclaimed he to the latter, "I am lost! Our man has lured his wife into a wood—I know not whether with the design to kill her, or to compel her to quit France. Take care of my money! I am going to learn further particulars."² So saying, his majesty passed into the queen's bedchamber. The news soon spread, and the royal cabinet became thronged with courtiers—Guise, Epernon, Crequy, Conty, and others, hastened to ascertain how his majesty bore the shock. Bassompierre somewhat satisfied the general curiosity, by explaining that imperfect tidings of M. de Condé's flight had reached the king, who had retired to deliberate. He then

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouhier, vol. 87.

² Bassompierre—*Journal de ma Vie*.

collected the royal winnings, and carried them to his master. Bassompierre found the king in violent agitation, having summoned his ministers, although the hour was past midnight. "Never did I behold a man more transported and bewildered. MM. de Cœuvres de Cramail, and others, were with him: to every suggestion made by these personages the king assented, and commanded Loménie to make despatch." At length the ministers, one by one, arrived at the Louvre, and were introduced to the royal presence. The chancellor de Bellièvre was quickly followed by Villeroy, and by the president de Jeannin. "M. de Bellièvre, you have heard the news—what is your counsel?" asked his majesty. Bellièvre hesitated, and made some irrelevant observations on the imprudence of M. de Condé. "I do not require your comments on the act—the remedy! the remedy! M. le Chancelier," angrily interrupted the king. "You must, sire, issue edicts, and make protests, and denounce all persons who shall furnish the said prince with money, shelter, or counsel!" Henry turned impatiently towards Villeroy, who at that moment entered. The latter shrugged his shoulders, and then coldly said:—"Your majesty can do nothing, except to instruct your ambassadors in foreign states to demand the expulsion of M. le Prince as a rebel and an ingrate. Monseigneur, having fled, is for the present beyond the jurisdiction of your majesty." "You, M. Jeannin, what do you advise?" ex-

claimed the king. "I am of opinion that your majesty should send one of your officers after M. le Prince to bring him back, if still within the realm. I believe that his flight has not long been premeditated; his highness has doubtless taken the route into Flanders: the archduke will not desire to embroil himself again with France, and, on your majesty's demand, will dismiss M. le Prince." This counsel was relished by Henry, who, however, waited to see Sully, before adopting any resolve. M. de Praslin had been despatched to the Arsenal to bring the duke, who was in bed. Very ungraciously Sully obeyed the summons: he arrived at the Louvre, and entered the cabinet in his most surly and abrupt manner. Henry darted forwards, and seized the hand of his favoured minister. "M. de Sully, the prince is gone, and has carried off his wife!" "Sire, did I not predict the event; if you had been only pleased to follow my advice, given a fortnight ago, M. le Prince would be now in the Bastille, where I would have kept him safe, and at your pleasure!" "It is useless to recur to the past—all this argument is out of date. What shall I now do?—speak! give me your advice," peevishly exclaimed the king. "The king, when I entered, was pacing the room, with downcast air: MM. les Ministres, and others, stood glued to the wall, being so confounded, that they remained speechless," writes Sully complacently, who usu-

ally describes himself as the hero whose presence restored vigour and action to the royal counsels. "Sire, you must do nothing!" "Parbleu, nothing! Do you call such words advice?" "Pardon me, sire, it *is* advice, and the best advice that can now be proposed to you!" "Your reasons?—I must have reasons; and what are they?" cried Henry, impatiently. Sully then proceeded very logically to demonstrate, that, until information was received as to the precise nature of the step taken by M. de Condé, nothing ought to be done: meantime, that the facts already ascertained should be treated with indifference; for that the Spaniards, if M. le Prince had sought refuge in their territory, would receive the fugitive with more or less consideration and honour, in proportion to the sensation which his rash flight occasioned in Paris. "What!" rejoined Henry, angrily, "you wish that I should endure that a paltry prince, my neighbour, should dare to shelter, or even to receive, the first prince of my blood against my will, without testifying my resentment? A fine counsel, truly! M. de Praslin, you will depart shortly to signify my intentions!"¹ The duke, unable to convince the king, skilfully pretended to explain his words; then, pleading fatigue, he requested a further interval, before he ventured to

¹ Mem. de Sully, liv. 26ème. Bassompierre, Journal de ma Vie, ann. 1610.

tender a second piece of advice which had just occurred to him. The conference in the queen's chamber then broke up: and the sight of the agitation of her consort could not have acted beneficially upon the invalid. The king then retired to his closet, and, with his own hand, addressed two missives to Balagny, governor of Marle; and to M. de Pesché, governor of Guise. His majesty commanded the arrest of the fugitives, in case they had not traversed the towns or governments of the officers addressed. "I command and direct you," wrote his majesty, "to arrest the prince, in any possible locality; and to effect this I empower you to employ all the available force at hand—namely, your garrison, and any other troops you can assemble. When you have made the capture you are to commit M. le Prince a close prisoner in the principal fortress of your respective governments, to be disposed of as I shall direct. You will, nevertheless, take care that no harm or dishonour occurs to his person, or to that of Madame his consort."¹ These letters were despatched the same night, and within two hours after the news of the departure of the prince reached the king—by La Chaussée, an exempt of the body-guard. This officer made such diligent haste, that he came up with the prince and princess at Landrécy, on

¹ Lettres Missives—Berger de Xivrey, vol. 7. MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Puys, MS. 72. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1009.

the evening of the last day of November — scarcely thirty-six hours after their flight from Muret.

CHAPTER II.

1609—1610.

Prince and princess de Condé at Castillon and at Landrécy—Their adventures—Despatch an envoy to the archduke—Measures of the royal agents—Reply of Albert—Madame de Condé proceeds to Brussels, and the prince withdraws to Cologne—Intervention of the marquis Spinola and the prince of Orange—The archduke invites Condé to reside in Brussels—Banquet and honours offered to M. and Madame de Condé—Correspondence of Henri Quatre on the affair—Demands the surrender of the prince—Ambassage of M. de Praslin—Its result—Ambassage of the marquis de Cœuvres—Its object—Powers intrusted to M. de Cœuvres—Interview with Condé and with the archdukes—Anger and discontent of Madame de Condé—Plots for the *enlèvement* of the princess divulged by Queen Marie—Correspondence of the king—Correspondence of M. de Condé—Conspiracies in France against the government—Intrigues of Madame la Marquise—Prognostics of the early death of Henri Quatre—Their

prevalence throughout the kingdom—Henry signs a league with the princes of Germany—His military designs—His anger at the detention of Madame de Condé—Departure of Condé from Brussels—His honourable reception by the viceroy of Milan—His correspondence with Spain—The abbé d'Aumale—Madame de Condé petitions for a divorce—Her measures—Conduct of the prince—His letter to his wife—Missives to the archdukes and to Spinola—Henry concludes his preparations for the pending campaign—Queen Marie nominated to the regency—Council of regency—Dissatisfaction of the queen—She demands her coronation—Reluctance of the king to assent to the ceremony—Agitation of the Jesuits—Depression of the king—His conversation with Sully—Counsel of the latter—Jaqueline le Voyer—Conspiracy for the assassination of the king—Its presumed causes—Intrigues of Concini—His unpopularity—Coronation of Marie de Medici—Arrival of their majesties at St. Denis—Madame de Condé at Brussels, the guest of the archduchess infanta Isabel.

AT Castillon, a small village in Hainault, the prince and princess de Condé halted to take repose. The fatigue, and grief of the latter are described as excessive. Hungry, soaked to the skin, with every limb aching from the fatigue, the condition of the beautiful young princess would have riven the heart of her royal admirer. That Madame de Condé submitted willingly to this *enlèvement*—as the friends of Condé assert—her future conduct contradicts. Resentment at the violence done to her; and a determination to abet and encourage every intrigue which should hasten

her return to Paris, inspired the mind of Madame. She felt no attachment towards her husband; her heart had been moved by Bassompierre, but now inclined towards the king; whose favour could place her at the summit of her ambition, and in degree release her from the yoke of matrimony, which she already abhorred. After thus allowing his wife a brief repose to recruit her strength, Condé continued his journey to Landrécy, the first fortified Flemish town beyond the frontier. He was received with surprise, but with great respect by the governor, M. de Boisy. The fugitives entered Landrécy at eight o'clock A.M.: by four o'clock in the afternoon La Chaussée arrived, accompanied by two archers of the royal guard. He first waited on the governor, and delivered the royal letter, which demanded the dismissal of Condé from the dominions of the archduke. La Chaussée further requested that M. le Prince, his consort, and his attendants might be put under arrest, until communications had been received from his majesty, and from their imperial highnesses.¹ The royal envoy then waited on the Prince, and delivered an autograph letter from the

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp. F. S. Germ. fr. vol. 1019. Lettre du roi à M. de Vaucelas, ambassadeur en Espagne. Bibl. Imp. F. du Puy, MS. 72, fol. 56. Lettres Missives—Berger de Xivrey, t. 7. De Thou—Hist. de son Temps, t. 15, edition de Londres.

king. Henry therein promised to overlook the *escapade*, and to receive Condé again into favour, provided that he immediately returned with his consort. News arrived shortly afterwards of the presence of M. de Praslin, and of M. de Balagny with a body of troops on the frontier. The chevalier du Guet, with 200 archers, advanced as far as Châtillon, ready to arrest the victims as they obeyed the prohibition of the sovereigns of the Low Countries; which it was not doubted would arrive, forbidding the prince to remain within their territories. The strait to which Condé seemed now reduced was overwhelming,—Madame rejoiced, and privately lauded the prompt action of the king to achieve *her* rescue. Condé, however, took heart; he first declined to obey the royal summons, alleging¹ that his journey was undertaken to visit his sister the princess of Orange at Bréda: he next despatched his trusty Rochefort, to the archduke Albert and to his consort Isabella, imploring a safe-conduct to visit them at the castle of Marimont, where their imperial highnesses were then sojourning—also the grant of a second passport, to en-

¹ “ Le prince repondit, qu'étant hors de mon diet royaume, il n'estoit pas tenu d'obeir au mien commandement, et au reste, qu'il n'avoit pas entrepris le voyage sans biscuit—voulant dire à mon avis, sans bonne seurété de ceux qui la lui pourraient donner où il estoit.” Lettre du roi à M. de Vaucellas. Lettres Missives, t. 7, p. 810.

able Madame la Princesse to travel to Brussels, and from thence to Bréda.¹ Virrey, the prince's secretary, moreover put on the disguise of a Walloon soldier, and, escaping the vigilance of the garrison of Landrécy, journeyed to Brussels, where he at once sought audience of the Marquis Spinola; and implored the intercession of the Spanish commandant, both with the archduke and with his Catholic majesty, that protection might be accorded to M. de Condé, a "fugitive from France, at the summons of honour and virtue." Virrey then procured an interview with the prince of Orange; whose aid and sympathy he succeeded in enlisting.²

Albert and Isabella were at Marimont, with a limited suite, which included no member of the privy-council. The importance of offending so potent a monarch as the king of France, by intervening in a private feud, was obvious.³ Albert, therefore, promptly dismissed M. de Rochefort after granting him private audience, during which he ascertained the leading incidents of the flight. His highness declined to give the safe-conduct to enable the prince

¹ "Il dépêche le sieur de Rochefort, accompagné du dit Antoine Camus, son domestique, vers leurs altesses."

² MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouthier, vol. 87.

³ "L'Archiduc, déjà prevenu par l'ambassadeur de France, estoit en doute sur ce qu'il devoit faire."—Mem. de la retraite de M. le Prince, by M. Claude Enoch Virrey.—MS. Bibl. M. F. St. Germain, fr. vol. 1019.

to journey to Brussels,—but recommended that M. de Condé should leave his dominions within three days: meantime M. le Prince might not quit Landrécy, nor traverse any other province of the Low Countries; but at the expiration of that interval he was simply to retrace his steps. The intercession of the archduchess, however, insured a passport to Madame de Condé to continue her journey to Bréda, to visit the prince of Orange. Isabella believed that she was performing a virtuous and truly royal action in thwarting the evil designs of king Henry; and in rescuing the young and lovely princess from perdition. Couriers were despatched to the duke d'Arshot, governor of Hainault, to see to the due execution of these mandates; and also to M. de Boisy, to exhort him to redoubled vigilance, in order to guard against the escape of the illustrious persons under surveillance. The zeal of Rochefort, however, far outstripped the expedition of the archduke's messengers. He arrived at Landrécy in the middle of the night of the 3rd of December; and rousing the prince, imparted his bad news, and the certainty of its speedy transmission to M. de Boisy, when escape would be hopeless. Condé rose, and, with spirit equal to the emergency, determined to escape from Landrécy before dawn. He summoned the governor, and, with smiling countenance, announced the return of Roche-

fort; adding, that their imperial highnesses had graciously summoned him to an interview at Marimont, whither he was about to proceed. Boisy respectfully made obeisance, seeing no reason to doubt the correctness of this report. Condé having compelled his young wife to rise and attire herself, mounted his horse, and taking the princess behind him *en croupe*, galloped from Landrécy, at four in the morning of the 4th of December, followed by the gentlemen of his suite. The governor, anxious to do honour to so illustrious a guest, actually offered the prince an escort of two hundred archers.¹ Condé accompanied his wife fifteen miles on her road to Brussels:—he then delivered her to the guardianship of his faithful Rochefort, and commanded him to escort her to the palace of the Prince of Orange, when the latter would relieve him from further responsibility. A tender scene of farewell was enacted by the royal pair—with much sincerity, it would appear, on the part of the prince; who was greatly smitten by the beauty

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp. F. S. Germain, fr. vol. 1719. “Pendant l’allée et la venue de M. de Rochefort la frontières était bordée de gens qui avoient la vue aux portes de Landrécy. Le Sr. de Praslin y étoit aux escoutes qui pensait déjà tenir le lièvre qu’il voyait en forme. Balagny vendoit déjà la peau de l’ours, tant il s’assuroit de la prise. Le chevalier du Guet appelle dans Landrécy, étoit le serpent au sein, etc.”—MS. Bibl. Im. F. Bouhier, vol. 87.

of his wife. Condé, then in momentary dread of arrest, hurriedly continued his journey to Namur; and from thence to the imperial city of Liege,—a refuge out of the jurisdiction of the archduke, the city being under the sway of its Bishop. From thence Condé travelled to Cologne, depressed in spirits at the repulse which he had sustained, and a prey to innumerable anxieties as to his ultimate destination.

The princess, meantime, continued her journey to Brussels, and was met two leagues from the capital by a gentleman sent by the prince of Orange, to bid her welcome, and to instal her in his palace. The next day Madame received the honour of a visit from the archduchess infanta; but the austerity of Isabel's salutation and her counsels so alarmed the young princess, that after the interview she wept long and bitterly. The marquis Spinola, meantime, when apprised of Condé's application to the archdukes, and of its summary rejection, remonstrated gravely with their highnesses on the impolicy of this decision. Spinola showed that the defection of a prince of the blood could not fail to throw confusion into the council of the great adversary of Spain; that although Condé was poor, and inexperienced, and therefore exercised little influence over the politics of his country, yet that his name was glorious; and that to be able to oppose to Henry, in case of

a war, the revolt of his nearest kinsman, would be no small triumph to his Catholic majesty. Finally, Spinola observed, that the custody of madame la Princesse might prove a potent means whereby to dissolve the confederation between his Christian majesty, the duke of Savoy, and the Protestant princes of Germany. These arguments being supported by the solicitations of the prince of Orange, who possessed the ear of the infanta, it was at length determined to send messengers to invite the prince to take up his abode in Brussels. Two officers, Le Breton and Antoine de Camus, selected from the escort of the princess, were chosen for this errand:—they were accompanied by one M. de Fritima, the secretary and confidential agent of Spinola.¹ Great was the content of Condé when these personages arrived at Cologne with their cheering message; and interrupted a weary round of devotions which he was offering in the churches of Cologne and its vicinity. He gratefully accepted the hospitality offered; and reached Brussels on the 22nd of December. After the festival of Christmas Day, the prince was admitted to audience by the sovereigns; who received him with marks of regard and sympathy. Condé eloquently detailed his assumed wrongs; and committed his consort to the guardian-

¹ MS. Bibl. Im. F. St. Gern. fr. vol. 1019. MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouhier, vol. 87.

ship of the infanta; for whom he craved her highness's protection and salutary counsels. Spinola imitated this gracious cordiality, by inviting the prince to an entertainment, which cost the sum of 3,000 gold crowns.¹ He also delicately offered pecuniary assistance to the prince on behalf of his Catholic majesty. These festivities were unpleasantly interrupted by the arrival of M. de Praslin in Brussels, sent on a special mission by king Henry to the government of the Low Countries—a measure rendered emphatic by the simultaneous despatch of a similar ambassage to the court of Madrid. Henry was deeply in earnest; and spared neither money, threats, nor diplomatic notes, to prove his resentment to the world; and especially to the “dishonest abettors of the revolt of M. de Condé.” The perturbation and irritation of Henry's mind at the *enlèvement* of Madame de Condé are perceptible throughout the incoherent despatches, which he addressed at this period to his envoys at the courts of Europe. To M. de Vaucellas, his ambassador at Madrid, Henry, after lamenting the waste of his favour and counsels on the uncongenial spirit of the prince, continues thus²:—“About two years

¹ Hist. de son Temps—De Thou, vol. 15. Récit de l'Abbé d'Aumale, MS. Bibl. Imp. F. St. Germ. fr. vol. 1019.

² Lettre de Henri IV. a M. de Vaucellas, ambassadeur en Espagne. Lettres Missives, t. 7. Bibl. Imp. F. du Puy. MS. 72.

ago, M. le Prince was seized with a violent fancy to travel; so earnestly and pertinaciously did he urge his request, that I was advised peremptorily to refuse his petition, being well aware of his restless and mischievous temperament. I, therefore, resolved to marry him, hoping thus to check his designs; the more especially as I perceived that in this matter, also, he was about to act with the same headstrong independence of my will. No sooner was he married, however, when the same desire to leave my kingdom again assailed him, and enthralled his mind; so much so that my arguments and remonstrances, and even the menace of forfeiting my favour, had no longer power to restrain or silence him. Nevertheless, as I trusted that regard for the honour of his name and house, and the experience gained by each successive year, would moderate his impatient humour, I temporized and indulgently supported these defects; so much so, that the last time he came to see me, I treated him kindly; and induced him to promise the queen my wife, that he would pay her another visit after her *accouchement*. Far from doing this, however, on the 29th of last month he quitted his house at Muret, which is about ten leagues from Soissons, accompanied by his wife; and, with seven or eight horses, he took the road to the Low Countries, without having previously obtained my permission; and travelled all night in terror and contention. He arrived at Landrécy at seven the following morning, having

suffered from bad weather, and from still worse roads. He found the gates of the above-mentioned town closed; and lodged in the faubourgs until ten o'clock, when he made his entry into the town. I was made acquainted on Sunday night of his departure, and of the designs of M. le Prince; and, as might be expected, was scandalized at his act, and indignant. I immediately despatched an exempt of my guards, La Chaussée by name, by one way; and the chevalier du Guet of my town of Paris, by another road; to pursue, remonstrate, and capture the said prince, before he quitted the territory of France: and if no longer within the jurisdiction of my realm, to present letters to all the governors, and commanders of Flemish towns, requiring them not to harbour him; but to deliver M. le Prince to the custody of my officers. The next day, I despatched M. de Praslin, captain of my body-guard, to the archduke, with the same instructions; or if M. le Prince had retired to Bréda, with letters containing a similar demand to the States of Holland." Henry continues to detail circumstantially the steps he had taken; and to recount the misdeeds of M. le Prince, throughout a long letter, in which he affects to assign causes wholly political to the flight of Condé; to the intense amusement of his subjects, who were perfectly aware of the infatuation of their king, and of its disastrous action on the susceptible spirit of Condé.

Praslin was admitted to audience by the sovereigns on New Year's Day, 1610. Albert replied, courteously, "that the passport granted to Madame la Princesse to visit her relatives at Bréda, could not with propriety be refused; neither, without grave cause, ought the royal pair to be separated, least of all by himself, who had no reason to complain of M. de Condé; nevertheless, the sojourn of the prince in the Netherlands should be abridged, as it was displeasing to the king, his sovereign."¹ To the solicitations of Praslin, Conde replied by a decided refusal either to return to France, or to write to the king. As he had reason to believe that M. de Berny, the resident ambassador of France at Brussels, was assiduous in his visits to the princess, for the purpose of exciting her hatred and contempt towards himself, the prince sent him a formal interdiction against future interviews with Madame. Berny, nevertheless, by dint of bribing the women of the princess, and especially through Phillipette, contrived to maintain a constant communication with her; and to transmit letters sent by the king; to all of which it appears that Madame responded. Perceiving that no salutary impression ensued from the admonitions of his envoy de Praslin, or by the remonstrances of de

¹ De Thou, vol. 15. Bentivoglio—Relatione de la fuga di Francia de Henrico de Borbone Principe de Conde, etc. Bibl. Imp. F. du Puy, MS.

Berny his resident ambassador, Henry resolved to despatch an embassy to the archdukes, commensurate in dignity with the importance which he attached to its mission. The ambassador selected was Annibal d'Estrées, marquis de Cœuvres, brother of the deceased duchess de Beaufort. He was empowered to make a formal demand for the persons of the prince and princess de Condé. His instructions directed the marquis first, privately to persuade and admonish M. le Prince to return to his duty; if such warning failed, and the prince proved contumacious, the marquis was ordered to proclaim him a traitor, and subject to the high penalties of treason. Moreover, if the archdukes refused the demand then to be preferred, the ambassador was authorised to use language which foreshadowed a speedy declaration of war on behalf of France. M. d'Estrées, moreover, was invested with a private commission to Madame de Condé;—he was to assure her highness of the admiration and special *bienveillance* of his majesty; and to exhort her to fly from her husband's protection back to that of her father, M. le Connétable. The prince was at Antwerp when the ambassador arrived in Brussels, but returned thither by the advice of his brother-in-law, the prince of Orange. M. d'Estrées sought an interview, which was at once granted. In reply to the reprimands administered, Condé coarsely alluded to the ill-regulated passions of his royal master; and expressed him-

self with such force and explicitness, as greatly to scandalise his visitor. "It is your duty, Monseigneur, to repent of your calumnies on the best and most indulgent of kings; to seek his majesty's pardon; and to return humbly and thankfully to your country. Failing your submission, it will be my sad duty to proclaim you guilty of treason, and amenable to its penalties," was the rejoinder of the marquis.¹ M. d'Estrées, it appears, bore great dislike to the prince, whose biting and somewhat malicious tongue loved to expose the origin of the ambassador's exalted honours and favour at court. "Any other envoy would have reconciled me to the king; why did his majesty send M. d'Estrées to taunt me, when the court has aforesometimes echoed to our altercations?" said Condé, at a later and more felicitous period of his life. Condé made response to the threats addressed to him by general assurances of loyal duty, when his majesty should condescend to grant

¹ Bibl. Imp. F. St. Germ. fr. vol. 1019. MS. MS. Fonds Bouhier, vol. 87. The credentials given to M. de Cœuvres were as follows: "A mon Frère l'Archeduc Albert d'Autriche: J'ai oui du Sr. Pecquius votre ambassadeur, la peine que vous avez prise envers mon neveu le prince de Condé pour le faire sage; et le peu que vous y avez avancé: dont je suis très marry autant pour s'être montré indigne de votre recommandation que de ma bonte. J'en-voie vers vous le marquis de Cœuvres, pour le subject. Je vous prie d'adjouster foy a tout ce qu'il vous dira de ma part comme vous feriez de la personne, même de votre bon frère. —HENRY."

him guarantees for the safety of himself and of those appertaining to him. He, nevertheless, desired to see the citation for *leze-majesté* with which he was threatened, when he would make full response thereon. There was too much bravado in this reply to serve the prince's cause, as he speedily discovered. The ambassador, finding private argument of little avail, had, therefore, recourse to his public instructions. He was received by the archduke and his consort with all due formality. In reply to the demand of the ambassador that M. de Condé should be delivered up to the justice of his offended sovereign, Albert replied, "that honour forbade him to violate the word he had given to M. de Condé; he would gladly, however, exhort him earnestly to accept of the gracious pardon offered by the king on condition of his immediate return." M. d'Estrées, with great assumption of offence, then demanded that Condé should be at once dismissed from the archducal territory; but that Madame la Princesse should be restored to her father. "I cannot forcibly detain the wife of any man; nor take a woman from the bosom of her husband!" replied the archduke. "I deem such demand to be a very ludicrous and unusual item in the instructions of an ambassador. *Valgame Dios!* I am a Spanish woman, and I do not deem myself compelled to act as a panderer to the unright-

teous passion of your king!" exclaimed the infant, hotly.¹ The audience terminated with these words; for the imperial pair rose, and passed into an adjoining apartment. M. d'Estrées thereupon produced the citation as demanded by Condé, and which declared him guilty of treason except on his submission; and proceeded to the palace of the prince of Orange to present it in person. As the prince had demanded guarantees for the effectual performance of the alleged amicable intentions of the king, the ambassador caused himself to be accompanied by the resident envoy de Berny, by Philip de Mainicamp chief secretary of Legation, and by M. de Préaux, a gentleman in the confidence of M. de Montmorency, and sent by the latter to confer with his daughter. These noblemen offered themselves as sureties of the good faith of their royal master. Condé took the document; but persisted in his former assertion; to wit—that he would return so soon as he could deserv safety for himself, and for those belonging to him. Meantime, he conjured his majesty to accept of his excuses, and of his protest against any public decree, given to his prejudice. This answer the prince put into writing, and sent in the same spirit of bravado, a few hours subsequently, to the hôtel of the

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouthier 87. Ibid. MS. F. St. Germ. fr. vol. 1019.

marquis de Cœuvres, by a public notary. The ambassador, believing the missive to be a simple communication from the prince, took the paper: whereupon the envoy hastily made obeisance, and withdrew, satisfied with this advantage. D'Estrées, however, on perceiving the nature of the missive, caused pursuit to be made after this personage; and, with his sword at the envoy's throat, compelled him to take back the document, deeming the acceptance of such derogatory to the honour of the king.¹

The negotiations of the ambassador having met with so signal a failure, D'Estrées had now recourse to the arts of seduction. Madame de Condé, impatient and angry at the irksome *surveillance* to which she was subjected, and at the daily lectures inflicted upon her by the archduchess, abetted in every possible way the designs of M. d'Estrées; and publicly expressed the greatest eagerness to return to Paris. A plot was consequently formed for her *enlèvement*, and her return into France—the details of which have not transpired in history. So ably was the abduction planned, that success would have been certain, it is alleged, had not the nature of the design been betrayed in an incautious moment by the king to his consort. Marie instantly sent Madame Concini to the ambassador

¹ Hist. de son Temps—De Thou, vol. 15.

of the archduke, commanding him to warn the infanta of the danger to which her protégée was exposed.¹ Condé and his patroness made no demonstrations; but, under pretext of doing honour to Madame la Princesse, Isabel invited her to take up her residence in the imperial palace;² and assigned to the young princess an apartment next to her own. So stern a duenna rendered the position of the princess still more cruel; and her tears and lamentations for "*sa belle France et la cour*," faithfully reported to the king by his envoy, increased Henry's irritation and dejection. A letter is extant, written about this period by the king to M. de Préaux, the personage commissioned by the constable to watch over his daughter's welfare, reveals the restless *ennui* which haunted the king's mind:—

Henri IV. to M. de Préaux.

"PRÉAUX.—I have written to *mon bel ange*: see that my letter reaches her if possible. As Girard, and our hostess³ are going, they cannot refuse to oblige me in so small a matter, as all other avenues

¹ Daniel—Hist. de France, t. 10, p. 437. M. Pecquius despatched a courier to Spinola.

² The princess removed into the palace on the 14th of February 1610.

³ There is no clue to the personage named by the king as "our hostess."

are interdicted: request, therefore, this favour of the one, and command it from the other in my name. Send me back any letters that I have written, and which it has been found impossible to deliver. I do not suppose that the bearer of this will find the Marquis¹ at Brussels; I do not, therefore, write to him. I suppose that the departure of our madman² will follow that of the marquis; you will then be able more truly to judge of the sentiments of the arch-dukes. Her father and aunt have spoken to Pecquius; their manner torments me much, for they are colder than this cold season: nevertheless, my warmth thaws them when we meet. Send me news as often as you can, principally of the health of our poor prisoner. Give Châteauvert and Phillipette³ assurance that I will never forget them.

“HENRY.”

“M. d’Elbène will tell you any other necessary news. Good night. I am growing so thin with my anxieties, that I am become all skin and bone. Everything is distasteful; I shun society: and if, to satisfy general expectation, I allow myself to be led into assemblies, instead of cheering, they kill me. Adieu!”⁴

When such letters as the above fell occasionally into the hands of the guardians of Madame

¹ The marquis de Cœuvres.

² Condé.

³ The women of the princess.

⁴ Lettre du roi à M. de Préaux—Lettres Missives, t. 7.

la Princesse, it was no wonder that they distrusted Henry's frequent assertion, "that he needed the society of la Princesse only to honour and indulge her with the love of a father," and accordingly redoubled their vigilant watch. When the archducal ambassador, Pecquins, transmitted the information which prevented the *enlèvement* of Madame, he informed his sovereigns that he had ventured to offer a word of intercession for M. le Prince; but had detected such extreme susceptibility and animosity in the minds of both the king and his minister, that he feared the peace of the Netherlands might be disturbed by the continued presence of M. de Condé in Brussels. The retreat of the prince to Milan was therefore deemed expedient by his imperial patrons, and acquiesced in by himself; the more so, as the intimacy contracted by Condé with the exiled duke d'Aumale greatly exasperated the king. Before leaving Brussels, Condé wrote to the king of Spain; in this letter he stated "that having been compelled to fly from France for the salvation of his life and his honour, he deemed himself bound to thank his Catholic majesty for the extreme benignity with which he had been re-

Archives du chateau de Villebon. In another letter to his ambassadeur de Berny, Henry adds the words as a post-script: "Escrivés moi amplement de toutes choses: de ce que l'on dit d'elle, et comment on la trouve!"

ceived in Brussels; and to supplicate that his majesty would still be pleased to extend his clement protection towards the afflicted, as became the prerogative of the greatest king on earth.”¹ He also addressed an epistle to M. de Montmorency, his father-in-law. Condé wrote—“The regret that I feel is inexpressible at the way in which I am treated: I affirm that had the *chemin d’honneur* been pursued towards me, instead of that which has been adopted; and that had time been allowed me to vanquish my chagrin, his majesty would have received from me the obedience which is his due. I am guilty of nothing but of having preserved my honour, which God by his grace has hitherto protected against all snares and enterprises. The king has caused me to be proclaimed a rebel, attainted, and convicted; yet I have never conspired against his person or his realm, which condemnation is a thing manifestly unjust, and worthy only of an absolutism which forbids the utterance, nay, the very appreciation of truth! Nevertheless, I am indifferent: storms exhaust themselves—and after rain comes sunshine! For many reasons—and, as I suppose, according to your own desire—my wife remains here in this virtuous refuge, from which no one shall take her. Assure yourself that I still love her; and that

¹ Le prince de Condé au roi d’Espagne.—MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouhier, vol. 87.

what I have done, has been undertaken to preserve her reputation—of which you also ought to be convinced and rejoice at my success, if the privilege of judging dispassionately was conceded to you. Let me tell you also that it is enough for you to have already one son-in-law in the Bastille, without wishing to send a second thither.”¹ The sadness of his position seems to impart bitter hilarity to the prince: he writes ironically to his friend and boon companion, a certain Prior de St. Julian. “I pray God to keep you in health, M. de St. Julian. Am I not a happy man? The king reads all my letters! though I hope that this one may escape him: nevertheless, for all things let God be praised! We are getting on tolerably well; the weather is fine in Flanders—as fine as it is in Paris, and even more so, for here we have liberty. Every man bears his own burden; every doctor leads his own mule; and every husband possesses his own wife—which is more than is permitted where you are—at least, without blame.”² Spinola, by command of the king of Spain, offered Condé a loan of 1,000 doubloons, which he was imprudent enough to

¹ Le prince de Condé au connetable de Montmorency.—MS. Bibl. Imp. *ibid.* The prince alluded to the count d’Auvergne, the husband of the constable’s second daughter Charlotte.

² Lettre du prince de Condé a M. le Prieur de St. Julian. MS. F. Bouhier, vol. 87.

accept. On the 21st of February 1610, Condé bade adieu to his wife, whom he consigned to the guardianship of the infanta, leaving the strictest injunctions, that during his absence she should not hold conference with the French ambassador; or appear in public, except in the suite of the archduchess infanta, or when accompanied by the prince of Orange. Condé quitted Brussels, and traversing Germany in disguise, arrived at Milan on the 1st day of March. He was attended by his faithful secretary, Virrey; and by Rochefort: the remainder of the companions of his flight he left with Madame, though the number was diminished by the defection of M. de Toiras, and of Condé's *maître-d'hôtel*, who obeyed the citation of king Henry, and returned to France in the suite of M. de Praslin.

The king, meanwhile, went through the dreary ceremonial usual on the attainder of a prince of the blood. His majesty repaired to la Chambre Dorée without the *appareil* usual on state occasions, and unattended by the great officers of state. He refused to occupy the throne; and took his seat in the chair of the first president. No royal guards kept the body of the hall; and Henry himself addressed the members, instead of signifying his will to the chancellor, who usually expounded the royal wishes to the Chambers.¹

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp., vol. 9772.

Henry pathetically recounted his grievances, and the contumacious conduct of M. de Condé; who had withdrawn from the realm, and had joined the Spaniards, refusing to return to his allegiance, or to accept the clement pardon of the sovereign! The house deliberated on the matter after the departure of his majesty, and gave a decree declaring the prince de Condé convicted of high treason; but left the chastisement of the traitor to the pleasure of his majesty.

The aspect of the court, meantime, followed the variations of the royal humour: no fêtes enlivened the Louvre: queen Marguerite alone afforded amusement to the brilliant idlers of the capital, by the splendour of her entertainments. The queen, yet scarcely convalescent from her recent *accouchement*, was dispirited, by the melancholy of her royal husband; and by the rumours everywhere prevalent that her own divorce was contemplated. The chief source of Marie's sorrow, however, arose from contemplation of the warlike preparations around; and by the knowledge that Henry intended soon to take the field in person. The queen deprecated the motives of the campaign—which were to bring back the princess de Condé in triumph; and to annihilate for ever the grandeur of her imperial relatives of Spain and Austria. Madame de Verneuil had entirely lost influence:—the king heard with impatience even the utterance of her

name in his presence; and never visited her hôtel. Henriette, therefore, deeming that her reign was over, anxiously sought to bind together the fragments of her once vast influence; and to draw closer the bonds of friendship, or interest, which in former days had rendered subservient the holders of some of the most potent names of France. Amongst the most prominent of these noblemen were the dukes de Guise, d'Epemon, and the prince de Joinville, who figured in the future court of the regency under the title of duke de Chevreuse. Still lovely and radiant in form and wit, Madame de Verneuil threw the spell of her fascinations over Guise; whose mental qualifications had greatly degenerated from the standard of that capacity which had elevated his father and grandfather to the first place in the councils of the realm. The duke laid his hand and fortune at the feet of the imperious favourite—so mighty an alliance transported the Balzac family, and Henriette herself with rapture. But the king—Madame de Verneuil and her admirers shrank before that formidable barrier of his anticipated opposition to their designs. Henriette knew that Henry angrily repulsed aspirants for her hand; and had more than once signified his opinion that an honourable and wealthy retirement rather befitted her position, when the court lost its attractions. The pair were not to be daunted by these

obstacles—the duke seemed too much enamoured; while Henriette's audacity had too often served her ends, not to inspire her with faith in her fortunes. It was therefore resolved that the bands of marriage between the duke and Henriette de Balzac should be put up in fictitious names in the parish church of Joinville:—this accomplished at a propitious season—that was to say, during the absence of the king with his army—it was agreed by the subtle schemers that a private marriage should unite them. The duke d'Epéron frequented the hôtel of Madame de Verneuil from different motives. He admired her intriguing and dauntless spirit—subtle, and yet self-controlled. Epéron watched the signs of the times:—he judged with the craftiness of one inured to the contests of courts, and to mutations of policy. He foresaw the coming regency—some said by virtue of astute prevision—other persons less charitable, averred, by means of the cunning of a mind callous at the contemplation of great crimes, aided by a hand dexterous in combination. Epéron was devoted to the queen; judging that a reconciliation between her majesty and Madame la Marquise, at this portentous season, would be eagerly accepted by the latter, and profitable to the former, he proposed that Henriette should make submissive overtures. The queen's jealousy had fast evaporated, now that Hen-

riette was no longer the heroine of the royal homage: the ill-regulated mind of her majesty subsided easily from extreme anger to amity, when the wrong which had provoked her hostile demonstration was hidden from her notice. The precise nature of the communications which took place between Marie and the discarded mistress, through Epernon, have never transpired. The guerdon assigned to Madame la Marquise seems to have been the confirmation of her riches and honours; permission, in case of a regency, to remain in France; and a promise, on the part of her majesty, to consent to her future union with M. de Guise. Henriette, at the commencement of the year 1610, retired from Paris to Marcoussy, where she seems to have holden intelligences, which, on the confession of one of the persons admitted to her confidence, were made the subject of judicial investigation after the assassination of the king. That Madame la Marquise had aforesometimes contemplated and discussed a scheme with the ministers of Spain to procure the deaths of the king and the dauphin, had been proved to the satisfaction of the privy-council and of the highest tribunal of the realm. Vengeance for her desertion by the king, the desire to complete her alliance with Guise, and to obtain the friendship and pardon of the future regent, and the liberation of her father and her

brother, were powerful present motives, likely to inflame the malignity of a mind constituted like that of la Marquise. Rumours, meanwhile, that changes were at hand, pervaded the realm from unknown sources, and spread over Europe. Predictions and horoscopes abounded, all putting a term to the king's life; and prescribing, as the means to avert the calamity, the relinquishment of one or other points of Henry's suspected policy. Peasant girls had dreams; men beheld ghastly visions; villages were startled by surprising phenomena in the air. Bells tolled without human agency; while wails and shrieks from invisible mourners spread affright through many a peaceful community. The orthodoxy of the king was again vehemently assailed; the alleged cause being the proscription by government of a virulent libel against Henry's Calvinist subjects from the pen of the Jesuit Gontier. In a sermon preached before the court, Gontier exclaimed, "Sire, rumours of war everywhere resound! Would that your majesty was about to turn your arms against the heretics of this realm, rather than against the sons of the true Church! How easily would this realm be cleansed, if every true Catholic would sweep before him that offence to his faith!"¹ The

¹ Mem. Historiques de la France, ann. 1609. De Thou, t. 15.

preacher was reprimanded by royal command. Nevertheless, this seditious sermon served as a pretext for Duplessis Mornay to forward privately from Saumur an address to the queen, through Madame de la Trimouille, stating that, in case the pending war proved fatal to the king, "she was to remember that her devoted servants were the Huguenots of the realm; for that they fully recognized the validity of her marriage with the king, which many of the orthodox held in doubt; and that they were loyal to M. le Dauphin."

Henry, undeterred by predictions, disloyalty, or discontent, steadily matured his schemes of conquest. The marriage treaty with Savoy was signed at the end of December 1609. At the commencement of the new year the prince of Anhalt visited Paris, to receive from the royal lips a full confirmation of the league with the Protestant princes of Germany—in order to place limits to the overgrown power of the emperor—or, as it was stated in the treaty, to wrest from the imperial crown the duchy of Julichs, fraudulently appropriated by archduke Leopold.¹ By the beginning of April the military preparations were on a scale which France had never before witnessed. Henry had an army of 30,000 picked troops in Champagne, under the duke de Nevers, and six thousand horse.

¹ Ibid.—Siri Mem. Reccondites, t. 2.

Lesdignières entered Dauphiny, *en route* for Savoy, at the head of 12,000 men, and 2,000 horse, where the duke of Savoy and the general of the Venetian republic were to bring a reinforcement of 30,000 men. Six thousand Swiss troops, led by the duke de Rohan, gathered under the royal banner for the army of Champagne; which his majesty was to conduct in person over the Flemish frontier, to join the German princes his allies, whose army already numbered 30,000 men. The Dutch engaged to enter the confederation after a stated interval; and to contribute an army of 16,000 men. The states of Denmark and Sweden engaged to co-operate by their fleets. This formidable league, which Henry and his minister Sully originated and sustained, and which consisted of the states of Savoy, Venice, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, the Protestant states of Germany, was subsidized by France. The economy and financial capacity of Sully had filled the coffers of the state. It was calculated that the monthly cost of the war would be one million two hundred and fifty thousand livres: and the same sum to be paid for subsidies to Henry's allies—or, reckoned in the aggregate, thirty millions of francs yearly. It was further stated that the realm could support this extraordinary expenditure for five years, without having recourse to increased taxation, or to other sources of

raising the revenue. In the Bastille and the Arsenal Sully had accumulated a treasure amounting to 41,000,000 francs: the revenue was not forestalled, and a surplus of six millions had been yearly invested.¹ Sully, moreover, promised, if requisite, to raise a further sum of 175,000,000 francs, without need of appeal to the people by escheats, and other royal monopolies.

“The king had resolved to reduce Milan, Montferrat, Genoa, and Naples, and to give to the duke of Savoy the Milanese and the duchy of Montferrat in exchange for the county of Nice, and for Savoy,” writes the Cardinal de Richelieu.² “The king had moreover determined to erect Piedmont and Milan into a kingdom; and to give the duke of Savoy the title of King of the Alps. He had also the design, on the separation of Savoy from Piedmont, to build a fortress on the borders of Piedmont, to reserve to himself the way into Italy.” It was his majesty’s intention to interest all the states of Italy in his conquests. The republic of Venice, by the addition of contiguous territory; the grand-duke of Florence, by giving him possession of strongholds usurped by the Spaniards; the dukes of Parma

¹ Mezerai—Grande Hist.—et Abrégé de l’Histoire de France.—Regne de Henri IV., ann. 1610.

² Hist. de la Mère et du Fils.

and Modena, by augmentation of territory; and to Mantua, to offer her, in exchange for Montferrat, the rich plains of Cremona. Such vast designs, backed by a mighty army, led by the most renowned captain of Europe, and a well-filled exchequer, were calculated to smite Europe with terror: but whether the predictions which swarmed everywhere, of the approaching demise of the king—and perhaps the knowledge possessed by the princes of Hapsburg, that means had been taken to procure the literal fulfilment of these sinister oracles—or the conviction that, with the restoration of Condé's wife, Henry's military ardour would flag,—it is certain, that the royal preparations excited more curiosity than dread. “What is said in Rome of my approaching campaign?” asked the king one day of the nuncio. “Sire, all persons are amazed at the vastness of your preparations, for no one can divine your majesty's ultimate designs.” “Nevertheless,” rejoined Henry, “what are my intentions supposed to be? Whom is it believed that I am about to attack?” “Majesté! those most experienced in such matters say and believe that the principal object to be achieved by your arms is the restoration of madame la Princesse de Condé.” At these words the excitement of the king flashed forth: with an oath, his majesty replied, “Right, monseigneur! it is my will to have her back; and I shall achieve it!—no person can prevent

or hinder me—no, not even God's vicegerent, your master! Her father is one of my oldest servants; he asks me to restore to him his daughter, the tears standing, the while, in his venerable eyes! I have promised, and I will accomplish!"¹

M. de Préaux meantime, continued to reside at Brussels as the agent of M. de Montmorency and the duchesse d'Angoulême; his mission being to solicit the liberation of the young princess. Madame led a melancholy life; she was denied all society but that of the ladies of the infanta, the prince and princess of Orange, and the marquesa Spinola. The French ambassador was seldom allowed an interview; and the sameness of a court devoted to etiquette, and to ascetic piety, prostrated her spirits and energy. She compared the magnificence of the French court with the dreariness of that of Brussels; and the chivalrous homage of the king with the churlish oppression of Condé. After the departure of the prince, Madame's seclusion was no longer so rigidly maintained. The young princess showed much contumacy, and insisted on seeing when she pleased, the envoys of the king her sovereign, and those of her father and aunt. M. de Berny had instructions from his royal master to furnish Madame with money;

¹ *Mém. pour servir à l'Histoire de France*, ann. 1610. *Journal de Henri IV.*—*Ibid.*

and to second every demand she might make. The princess of Orange asked the princess to accompany her to Bréda; and by the advice of Berny the invitation was accepted. The infanta, however, interposed and, “by the exercise of intolerable tyranny, forbade the visit, as M. le Prince had consigned his consort to her guardianship: the which she could not relinquish unless by the consent of the latter, the more especially as Bréda was under the jurisdiction of the republic of Holland.

The prince, meantime, had been installed in the palace of the viceroy of Milan. Fuentes, under the pretence of doing the royal fugitive honour, assigned him a body-guard, and forced upon him numberless oppressive distinctions—all, however, with the intent of preventing the secret departure of a malcontent so illustrious. Under pretext of saving him from annoying reprimands, every person suspected of being an emissary of king Henry, was excluded from Milan; every hostile rumour was exaggerated: and pretended discoveries of conspiracies to take his life, were constantly disclosed to the prince. Condé published a manifesto¹ excusing his conduct. He reiterated his assertion, that he fled from France to save his honour, endangered by the mad passion of the king for Madame la Prin-

¹ De Thou—Hist. de son Temps. Recit de l'Abbé d'Aumale, Bibl. Imp. F. St. Germ, fr. 1019.

cesse, which he stated had commenced two years before his marriage; that he had been compelled to accept the alliance by the threats of the king to commit him to the Bastille in case of refusal; and persuaded thereto by the exhortations of the duke de Bouillon, cousin of his consort. That the king had corresponded with Madame la Princesse, and had twice sought an interview in disguise—once in his very presence, when he had detected his majesty in the *travestie* of a *valet de chasse*—all which facts seldom permitted him to enjoy a peaceful hour. Moreover, that he could not suffer the humours of M. le duc de Sully, who trampled under foot the freedom of the subject, and the rights of the princes; that he often actually annulled by his sole authority, the decrees of the High Courts; that the people groaned under the burden of an enormous taxation; and that he and his agents shamelessly disposed of place and offices to the highest bidders. Finally, that he, M. le Prince, was weary of such oppression, and of the tyrannous rule of an obscure Scotchman,¹ who owed his fortune and his peerage to the patronage of the deceased princes of Condé! The prince, moreover, addressed a second letter to the king of Spain, praying for protection, pension, and refuge at Milan. Philip sent an affable reply, written in

¹ The duke de Sully.

the French language; at the same time, nevertheless, the Spanish ambassador in Paris hinted that, if king Henry would break alliance with the duke of Savoy, his Catholic majesty would command M. de Condé to depart from his dominions. To Vaucellas, Henry's ambassador at Madrid, the language of the duke of Lerma was more unpromising. "France," said the duke, "has always protected the rebellious subjects of his Catholic majesty—such as Antonio Perez, and the Dutch rebels. Spain, on the contrary, has been the holy refuge of oppressed personages: the king, my master, cannot, therefore, refuse his protection to M. de Condé; at least, until he has consulted thereon the chief potentates of Christendom!"¹ The fears and anxieties of Condé were much increased by the news which he received from France, of the irritating effect on the mind of queen Marie of a little incident which occurred at the banquet given by Spinola. The prince had possessed the sympathy if not the regard of her majesty; who beheld with pleasure the determined resistance made by Condé to the sinister designs of the king. After the banquet at Brussels, toasts were proposed; the princesse de Condé

¹ Lettre du Roi à M. de la Boderie, son ambassadeur en Angleterre—Ambassades de M. de la Boderie, t. v. Lettres Missives, Berger de Xivrey, t. 7.

timidly rose, and exclaimed: "I drink to the health and happiness of the queen!" "What queen?" roughly asked Condé—"Which queen, madame?" demanded Spinola. "Her majesty — *our* queen, monseigneur," pointedly replied the young princess, who wanted neither wit nor spirit, addressing her husband. The anecdote was transmitted to the Louvre by M. de Berny. The hot temper of the queen flamed at the supposed insult: as it was reported that Condé had observed that the legitimacy of the dauphin was at least assailable; the king having put away his first wife on the futile plea of consanguinity; and having espoused Marie de Medici when bound by pre-contract to another woman. "If M. le Prince were to stand before me at the present moment, I would stab him to the heart with my own hand! Let him expect neither favour nor protection from me!"¹ had been the queen's fierce comment.

Madame de Condé, meanwhile, succumbed to the advice and evil influences round her; in vain the archduchess infanta represented that, being a princess of the blood of France, her lot could not be more august; that she had now rank next to the queen and the princesses; and that the king, by marrying her to his

¹ MS. Bibl. Im. F. St. Germ. fr. 1019. Recit de l'Abbé d'Aunale.

nearest kinsman, had done all in his power for her elevation—"and will you descend from this rank, madame, to infamy? and abdicate the position of cousin to his majesty for that abject one of his mistress?—you a Montmorency born!" The young princess wept, and acknowledged that perhaps she ought to mourn the absence of her lord: nevertheless, at the suggestion of Berny the royal ambassador, and of de Préaux and Mainicamp, she was induced to set her signature to a petition praying for the dissolution of her marriage with Condé, on the pleas of dissimilarity of disposition, inclination, and temperament. The tidings of this blow were transmitted to Milan; and seem to have overwhelmed Condé more than any of his previous misfortunes. His dignity and manly forbearance under the provocation are highly to be commended. He finds excuses even for Madame—"I will not blame her, but rather those who so wickedly seek to mislead and take advantage of her youth and inexperience. A Saint Theresa, or the holiest virgin the world has seen, must have fallen before such constant temptation: nevertheless, madame," writes Condé to Madame d'Angoulême,¹ "I hope

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp. F. St. Germ. fr. 1019. Henri de Bourbon a Madame Diane de France, duchesse d'Angoulême, "C'est pourquoi je n'en donne la faute a personne qu'à ceux et à celle qui s'y meschamment ont circonvenu sa jeunesse. Une sainte Thérèse, et les plus religieuses

not to fail in my duty of loving and cherishing her, as God and my reason command, pardoning and forgetting her errors!" To his wife Condé addressed the following letter, on hearing that her application for divorce, of which he feigns to be ignorant, was supported by all her relatives, who sought thereby to recommend themselves to royal favour.

*The Prince de Condé to Madame la Princesse
de Condé.¹*

"MA CHÈRE MAÎTRESSE,—I cannot understand, nor forbear to express my astonishment at the causes which prevent you from testifying to me by letter the friendship and kindly feeling which you owe to me, as I have never done any deed to forfeit such. I fear that the fine and subtle persuasions to which, against my desire and your duty, you have listened, are the cause of the negligence and indifference which you have manifested since our marriage. You are aware that all the evil and troubles which beset me have been incurred to save your honour; the which you ought to cherish more than life, and to esteem nothing as difficult or annoying which may promote so holy a design and intention. I conjure you, therefore, dear heart, to repair the fault which you

vierges du monde eussent succombé à tant de persuasions," etc.

¹ Henri de Bourbon à la princesse de Condé, sa femme.—MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouhier, 87.

have committed in not having responded to my love, with assurances worthy of your own courage and birth. Believe me, you are now in a safe and honourable asylum, wherein you ought to desire to abide; and where, indeed, you must remain until you can rejoin me, when I hope that three words from my lips may efface and obliterate the chimeras implanted in your mind by the enemies of your fame. I send you a thousand kisses and salutations; and I promise that I will love you dearly until death. Show this letter to the serene infanta. I am writing to the archduke, and have said that you will do so.—Milan, this Ascension Day, 1610.

“Your very affectionate husband,

“HENRY DE BOURBON.”

The prince wrote a few lines to the marquesa Spinola, in which, alluding to the petition of divorce signed by his wife, he observes—“such are the wiles by which they seek to seduce and ruin that young soul, in such fashion that she perceives not the terrible precipice over which she is balancing, and at the bottom of which it is sought to bury my honour and her own.”¹ To the marquise, Condé writes a long and interesting letter by the same courier; in which he enters into the detail of his views and intentions, chiefly for the edification of his

¹ MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouhier, vol. 87.

Catholic majesty, and of Lerma, his minister.

The Prince de Condé to the Marquis Spinola.¹

“MONSIEUR,—I have received the letter which it has pleased your Excellency to address to me, and which enclosed copies of the petitions signed by my wife and by her father, the constable. Although the subject is one worthy of amazement, yet I do not distress myself greatly thereupon, as your Excellency may judge, knowing what I confided to you by word of mouth before my departure. It is the effect of the continued harass of the evil and immoral people around my wife; nevertheless, I do not blame her, for it will be easy to induce her to change her mind and her opinions, when her ears are out of the reach of the said rascals.

“I am sending a gentleman express to their imperial highnesses, to implore them to remember the promise which they made me when they received my wife in their palace; also, to bear in mind that the petition just presented by my wife is filled with lying slanders, which demonstrates that it has not been dictated by herself; only that she has yielded weakly to be the panderer and abetter of those who seek her ruin and dishonour. M. le Comte (de Fuentes) approved of my letter to her; also, that I feigned to be ignorant of late occurrences. I am sending the

¹ MS.—Ibid.

sieur de Rochefort my chamberlain, to Spain, to inform his Catholic majesty of these cabals; and to supplicate his said majesty to be pleased to ordain that my wife shall be transported by sea (from the Low Countries) into Spain without delay: moreover, the said sieur has orders to inquire respecting the health of the Catholic queen, and of messeigneurs, her children; and to beg the said king to ordain what I shall do in case of a war, so that I may demonstrate that he has not conferred favour upon an ingrate, nor upon a coward. I hear that the duke of Savoy is about to send an envoy into Spain, to ask the approval of his majesty to his intended marriage alliances with France! I am still lodged in this palace, under great constraint. I take all patiently; nevertheless, it had better cease. I pray your Excellency, with all my heart, to believe that I am your very humble and obliged servant,

“HENRY DE BOURBON,

“Prince de Condé.

“From Milan, this 19th day of May, 1610.”

To the archduke Albert, Condé wrote by the same courier:—“I am profoundly afflicted at the manner my wife behaves: the indecorum of her conduct, however, I attribute rather to the ambassador than to herself, as the said tempters have ever their purse and their mouths open to compass her ruin. I thank your highness for rejecting the unjust petition against me; and I

continue to trust that my wife, being lodged in the palace, will have greater liberty to refuse their importunity. I pray your highness to issue commands that these said persons may no longer be admitted to her presence, but totally excluded from audience. I love my wife extremely; and I feel convinced that every evil impression and angry feeling will vanish before my presence and expostulation."¹ Henry, meantime, received, and pretended to consider, the petition of Madame de Condé and her relatives, for matrimonial separation from a tyrant, and from a rebel! The proceedings of the prince were supremely offensive to king Henry: not only was his passion for the princess indecorously paraded at foreign courts, but the conduct of her husband was an aspersion on his majesty's forbearance, who had never been known to sacrifice justice, and the sentiments of honour to private indulgence. A second mission was despatched to the archdukes in the name of the king, to demand the restoration of Madame de Condé to her kindred, that she might benefit by the protection and advice of her father and brother, MM. de Montmorency, during the consideration of her petition for divorce: also, that holding the rank of first princess of the blood, she might be present at the ap-

¹ Henri de Bourbon, prince de Condé, à son Altesse l'Archiduc. — MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouhier, vol. 87.

proaching coronation of her majesty Marie de Medici.

The energy of the king, and the ability and promptitude of his ministers, had brought to a conclusion all important matters upon which the success of the ensuing campaign depended. Levies of men were completed; the army was thoroughly organized; and the money-chests of the Arsenal and the Bastille were brimming with treasure. There only remained to provide for the home administration during the king's absence. After much anxious solicitude, Henry, by the advice of Sully, determined to nominate the queen as regent of the realm. Marie's powers, however, were to be limited. A council of regency was nominated, in which every measure was to be decided by a majority of suffrages. The queen possessed one vote only; and was bound to adopt the opinion of the majority of the council. The members were, the cardinals de Joyeuse and du Perron; the dukes de Mayenne, de Montmorency, and de Montbazon; the marshals de Brissac and de Fervaques; Château-neuf, who had been declared lord-keeper of the seals during the regency; M. de Harlay, first president of the parliament; M. de Meulan, first president of la Chambre des Comptes; the counts de Château-Vieux, de Liancour, and de Pontcarré; M. de Gesvre secretary of state; and M. de Maupeau master of the ex-

chequer.¹ The limitation of the queen's power as regent was extremely unwelcome to Concini, Epernon, the duke de Bellegarde, and others. The king, when counselled to concede more ample authority, observed, that in cases in which her majesty disapproved the opinion arrived at by her council, she could withhold her signature to such decree, when the matter might be referred for his own decision. Perceiving that the king was immovable on this point, Concini next inspired the queen with the persuasion that her authority would be ridiculed, and her personal influence undervalued, unless the solemn rite of her coronation preceded the assumption of the office of regent. A suggestion so flattering to her pride and ambition was welcomed by her majesty. Henry, when his assent was solicited, refused to sanction the project; he replied, that the expense of the ceremonial, and the need, which had become urgent, that without delay he should lead his army into Germany, forbade the design. Marie wept, and passionately declared, "that since her arrival in France, insults had overwhelmed her; and that none

¹ De Thou—vol. 15. Mezerai, *Grande Hist. de France*. Hist. de la Mère et du Fils—Dupleix—Sully. Le Vassor, *Hist. de Louis XIII.* De Coste, *Vie et Eloges des Dauphins de France*.

of the privileges and magnificences which had enhanced the majesty of the queens her predecessors had been conceded to her ! ” Every means was adopted to overcome the royal decision. Sully was courted ; the princes of the blood were asked by the queen to demand that her consecration should precede their homage to the regent. The most successful engine employed was the pulpits of of the Jesuits : while the noisy and factious declamation of certain priests, who denied the validity of the king’s second marriage, received encouragement, and even patronage. The preacher Gontier, in an address pronounced in Nôtre Dame, before the court, broke forth into a fanatical tirade against the Protestant population of the realm ; which he exhorted Henry to annihilate, as a first and holy holocaust in the pending campaign. “ These wretches, miserable and for ever accursed, dare to call the Holy Father Antichrist ! ” exclaimed the preacher. “ Sire, hear and attend ! — these heretics reject, and utterly abhor your marriage with the august Marie de Medici : she is not their queen, and mother of the dauphin. Her union with your majesty was contracted on the sole authority of pope Clement, of blessed memory ; but in their eyes, the Antichrist—who, as the Beast and false prophet, can neither decree, annul, build up, nor destroy. Has Divine

unction, they daringly ask, been invoked by your majesty on the head of her, called your consort ? ”¹ The preacher had to pay the penalty of his insolent harangue. Henry was not a prince to be defied with impunity. Gontier received his dismissal as one of the royal chaplains; and was suspended from preaching in public for the space of three months. The queen, meantime, rendered frantic by the reports sedulously communicated to her, continued to demand that the damage done to her son's legitimacy by the weak and criminal tolerance shown by the king to the aspersions of Henriette de Balzac, should be effaced in the eyes of Europe, and of France, by her own solemn coronation. Henry at length, worn by solicitations, and perhaps feeling that some reparation was necessary, and due, reluctantly gave his assent that the ceremony should be performed at St. Denis. Though all things prospered at home and abroad, and Henry stood on the pinnacle of sovereign power and popularity, recognised universally as the most potent monarch in Europe, deep melancholy oppressed his mind. He was seen fre-

¹ De Thou—Hist. de son Temps, vol. 15. Dupleix. Mem. Hist. de France, ann. 1609-10. “Si un Jesuite a Bordeaux eut prêché devant moi, ce que le P. Gontier a prêché en presence de votre majeste, je l'eusse fait jeter dans l'eau, au sortir de la chaire!” exclaimed the marshal d'Ornano, governor of Guyenne.

quently to pace up and down his chamber, his hands clasped tightly across his brow; his rest was broken, his appetite failed, and his discourse was filled with melancholy reminiscences. A presentiment of danger and death haunted him: all the many sinister predictions uttered during his reign had revived; and fatalities seemed to culminate during the approaching month of May. Dreary indifference loomed over his favourite pastimes; the society of his friends was irksome; and often the pen with which his majesty had ably sketched a plan of campaign, was thrown aside with words of desponding weariness. Throughout Europe the same gloomy expectation existed: the marching forth of the hosts of France under the banner of the greatest captain of the age excited no terror; and no potentate quailed with fear of overthrow. An attitude of dull expectation pervaded the people of the border states. The emperor Rodolph, from his seclusion in the Hradschin of Prague, cast horoscopes; but demonstrated little anxiety for the defence of his frontier. Philip III. believed the assurances of his minister Lerma, that the expected invaders of his Lombard territory, would be turned back again to the place from whence they came. King James interrupted his erudite studies, to predict, observe, and to furnish classical parallels of the designs of his good brother of France, from the heroes of antiquity.

The generals competent to encounter the king displayed neither anxiety nor misgiving; Fuentes, Spinola, and the archduke Leopold, tranquilly waited the royal advance, and communicated to their respective lieutenants, the information imparted at the frequent secret audiences which they granted to unknown persons, who suddenly appeared in camp, and as stealthily vanished. During the month of April, predictions of Henry's demise or approaching death were multiplied throughout Europe; and omens and presages of coming calamity were reported everywhere, from persons doubtlessly prepared by rumour for such catastrophe. "There must have been several conspiracies aimed at the life of our good king, as from twenty different districts warnings were forwarded," writes Péréfixe. "His death was publicly announced in Madrid and Milan; a courier passed through the town of Liège, eight days before the assassination of his majesty, who openly said that he bore the news of the king's death to the allied princes of Germany. At Montargis, a note was discovered on the altar in the church, which contained a prediction of Henry's decease by violence." At Bayonne, rumours became rife with such circumstantial details, that the mayor deemed it his duty to proceed to Paris, and impart the facts to Villeroy. At Cambray, one of the syndics of the town was heard to

mutter, during a discourse in which the great deeds of Henry were discussed: "Ah, ah, that man entertains great designs, but he will not live to execute them!" In Paris, marvellous omens were published by the soothsayers and empirics who, since the days of queen Catherine de Medici, had made the capital their head-quarters. On May-day, the may-pole planted with great ceremony in the court of the Louvre suddenly fell. "In Germany, alas! we should deem this a lamentable presage!" exclaimed Bassompierre. "Hold, monseigneur," responded the king, who had overheard the observation;¹ "for twenty years my ears have been dinned by omens. Be assured that nothing will happen to me but that which God ordains!" Sully, however, expatiates sadly on the dismal moods of his royal master; who, he states, wandered restlessly from the council-chamber to the saloon, and from the saloon, through the halls of his Arsenal and Bastille. "The king often entered my study, and, seating himself upon a low chair expressly reserved for his use, gave himself up to dark forebodings.—'Ah, mon ami!' exclaimed the king one day, 'ah! how this ceremony of the coronation disturbs me. I do not know wherefore, but a presentiment of evil afflicts me. Pardieu, I shall die in this

¹ Bassompierre—*Journal de ma Vie*—1610.

city—never shall I again quit Paris. They mean to kill me—they see and feel that it is their last and only resource. Ah! cursed coronation!—I shall fall during its parades!” ‘Mon Dieu, sire,’ retorted Sully, ‘why do you thus trouble yourself? Take my advice, forbid this coronation; postpone for an interval your campaign. May I act? I will soon dispose of both?’ ‘Yes,’ replied his majesty, ‘I will have no coronation. Is it not predicted that I shall die during the first pompous ceremonial of my reign, and while I am seated in a coach?’ ‘Sire, forbid the coronation; or suffer the ceremony to be performed without your presence. Better still—permit me now to despatch a messenger to stay the preparations at St. Denis?’ ‘I desire it—but what will my wife say? She is marvellously resolved upon this coronation!’ ‘Let her say what she pleases, sire: nevertheless, I believe that when her majesty hears your forebodings, that she will persist no longer in her design!’” Sully relates that he then sought audience of the queen, to implore her to relieve the anxiety which oppressed the king by voluntarily requesting to the postponement of the ceremony: “It is with regret that I am compelled to record, that I never could persuade her majesty to yield; but neither will I place on record the prayers and solicitations which during three days I ceaselessly employed to move

her inflexible resolve."¹ So Henry continued his laments, chafing under the weight of the prognostics which burdened his heroic mind: bemoaning the absence of Madame de Condé; and the enforced delay of the campaign, on the prompt opening of which he believed his life depended.

The events of the conspiracy, meantime, which hereafter were to figure as part of the deposition of Jeanne le Voyer, Dame de Comant,² were in progress at this period to smite one of the best and most tolerant of kings. Madame de Verneuil, it is alleged, in despair at her fall from favour, and at the peril which menaced her friends the Spaniards, resolved to avenge herself, and to secure her alliance with Guise, and the freedom of her kinsmen, by the steel of the assassin. It appears that la Marquise had admitted to her intimate confidence, Mademoiselle du Tillet,³ a woman of depraved life; and her own niece, Charlotte Catherine Dame de Chantemesle⁴—and

¹ Mem. de Sully, liv. 27ème.

² Jacqueline le Voyer, wife of Isaac de Varennes ecuyer, sieur de Comant. This name is spelled in various ways: by some authors, Escomant, Coman, Coetman, etc.

³ Charlotte du Tillet, daughter of Jean du Tillet, seigneur de la Bussière, greffier en chef du parlement.

⁴ Charlotte Catherine de Balzac, daughter of Charles,

to these personages she made revelation of her regicidal design, and her desire to espouse Guise. Madame de Chantemesle introduced la Dame de Comant to her aunt, as a humble friend, willing to promote her designs and to serve by her ability and tact. "Madame de Verneuil favoured me at the recommendation of her niece; and by-and-bye I became so intimate with her, that she confided to me her most precious secrets," says Jacqueline de Comant, in her deposition. The latter states that the wicked malice of la Marquise towards the king had been ceaseless since her imprisonment: that M. d'Epemon was her adviser and confidant: and that together, for many reasons, both personal and political, they had resolved upon the death of the king. About the year 1609, Henriette, it is averred, sent a letter to Madame de Comant, in which she commended its bearer to the hospitality and friendship of the latter—this personage was one François Ravailiac, a native of Angoulême; whom the Marquise stated was in her service, and had journeyed to Paris to execute a commission for M. le duc d'Epemon. This individual is described by Jacqueline as ill-favoured in features and dress, voracious, loving to loiter in the vicinity of the

comte d'Entragues, brother of Madame de Verneuil, and of Jeanne Caignon de St. Bohaire. This lady married Jacques d'Illiers, sieur de Chantemesle—she eventually inherited the honours of Entragues.

Louvre; and having a certain malignant listlessness of manner, which induced her, knowing the designs of her patronesses, to apprehend sinister results from the visit. The year 1609 elapsed: Jacqueline paid two visits to Verneuil and to Marcoussy; and had received Ravailac thrice at her abode. Being at this period well initiated in the conspiracy; and having ascertained the existence of a treasonable correspondence with Spain, Jacqueline, on her arrival in Paris about January 1610, determined to reveal the plot. The most extraordinary carelessness rewarded her efforts: she applied for audience of the queen, which was granted; but the interview was delayed under frivolous pretexts, though Jacqueline followed the court to Fontainebleau; and afterwards, as she deposed, remained a whole day in the royal antechamber at the Louvre. Madame de Comant next sought the Jesuit Cotton at his monastery, but found that he had quitted Paris. In despair she applied to queen Marguerite, who rendered her sensible and effectual aid, though disbelieving her story. The queen sent one Mademoiselle de Gournay to hear the statement; and directed the latter to communicate the matter, whatever might be its nature, to M. de Sully.¹ This was done

¹ Veritable Manifeste de la dame de Comant. Archives Curieuses, t. 15.

through the intervention of M. de Schomberg. Sully listened with profound misgiving; yet doubts of the truth of the story must have arisen, as, instead of personally apprising his majesty of the pretended conspiracy, he advised Schomberg to inform the king; and directed that Mademoiselle de Gournay should see Caterina Selvaggio, the queen's favourite fire-woman, and request her to reveal the matter to her royal mistress.¹ Whether Schomberg or Caterina obeyed these directions is not known; a few days subsequently, Jacqueline de Comaut was suddenly arrested for debt, and cast into the Conciergerie, where she was found a prisoner after the catastrophe of the king's demise.

The preparations for the august ceremony about to be performed, were watched with impatience by the king—every delay irritated him; and the most trivial disappointment appeared insupportable. By the 6th day of May the ceremonial was arranged, to the satisfaction of all personages concerned excepting M. de Soissons, who on all public occasions during this reign took occasion to manifest his jealous and susceptible temper. The king had decreed that the young duchesse de Vendôme should walk in the procession of princesses of the

¹ Mem. de Sully, liv. 27. Manifeste de la dame de Comaut.

blood, and wear a robe *fleurdelisé* like the other royal ladies. M. de Soissons thereupon flew into a transport of rage; and declared that Madame la Comtesse should not join in a procession dishonoured by the intrusion of the wife of the king's illegitimate son. Henri retorted; and the *fracas* ended by the departure of M. de Soissons and his wife to their summer palace at Montigny; and by their exclusion from the ceremonial. Two days previously M. Concini, moreover, was the hero of an *émeute* amongst the clerks of his majesty's Chamber of Common Pleas. Having occasion to seek audience of one of the judges in that court, Concini arrogantly presented himself covered, booted, and wearing golden spurs—such being alone the privileged array of the royal princes, and of the marshals of the realm. A fierce attack was therefore made on the intruder; who, to escape the buffets and taunts of the officials, was compelled to make ignominious retreat.¹ The affair created some sensation at court, as the queen demanded reparation for her favourite. “Madame,” said the king, “have a care; the sword of the sieur Concini is not so sharp as the wits and the pens of my loyal clerks!” On the 12th of May the preparations at St. Denis were completed. Money had been lavished without

¹ Journal de Henri IV.

stint in costumes, jewels, donations, and blazons; so that the ceremonial might equal in splendour, that of any previous coronation. The royal pair, however, in whose honour this pageant had been prepared, were dejected, and in degree alienated. On the night of the 10th of May, Marie dreamed that the diamonds and gems of her crown, were changed into pearls, emblems of tears, and widowhood. This dream was succeeded by a second still more harrowing, and from which she started with a cry of alarm. Henry anxiously asked the cause of her disquietude? "Sire, do not ask; I place little faith in dreams." "I agree with you, m'aymie—nevertheless, relate to me your dream." "I dreamed then, sire, that some one had stabbed you at the foot of the little staircase." "Sleep! m'aymie, praise be to God it is but a dream!" replied Henry. On the evening of Wednesday May 12th, their majesties arrived at St. Denis, and took up their abode in the abbatial residence. At the sound of the pealing bells which welcomed their majesties, the marble slab, which covers the mouth of the royal vault was, it was said, miraculously lifted from its grooves, and cast on the polished pavement of the choir, in front of the platform beneath the throne. The queen afterwards related that her sleep, and that of the king, had been broken by the melancholy croaking of a bird, which seemed to be fluttering,

close to the window of their chamber.

The morning of Thursday 13th opened propitiously. Henry was gladdened by cheering intelligence from his army of Champagne; also, by a despatch from Berny his ambassador at Brussels, the purport of which was to inform the king that the archdukes, on the near prospect of war, apparently began to deem that the detention of Madame de Condé might entail too serious a sacrifice; and that the archduke Albert had caused the vigilant watch established over the young princess to be relaxed. Nevertheless, there was danger that Madame might be smuggled on board a Spanish vessel then at anchor off Antwerp, and conveyed to Spain, in deference, as it was reported, to the wishes of his highness, M. de Condé.

CHAPTER III

1610.

Coronation of Marie de Medici—Details and incidents of the ceremony—Return of the court to Paris—The 14th of May—Incidents of that fatal day—François Ravallac—Assassination of Henri Quatre—Despair of the people of Paris—The duke d'Epemon—The body of the king is conveyed to the Louvre—Incidents—Queen Marie de Medici—Her terror—She learns the news of her husband's death from the chancellor de Sillery—Her anguish—Louis XIII.—The duke de Sully—His grief and deportment—Sets off to visit the queen, but retires to the Bastille—His supposed motives—Precautionary measures are adopted by the duke—He declines to repair to the Louvre—The dukes d'Epemon, de Guise, de Bellegarde, and the marquis de Bassompierre assume the conduct of affairs—They garrison Paris, and prepare to compel the recognition of the regency of Marie de Medici—

Attitude of the Parliament of Paris—It sends deputies to the Louvre—Their interview with the queen—Measures of the Chambers—The death-chamber of Henri Quatre—Message sent to the High Court by the chancellor—The dukes de Guise and Epernon enter the parliament armed—Their menace to the members—Debate on the regency—Agree to the regency of the queen-mother, and they despatch envoys to notify the fact to her majesty—The duke de Sully visits the queen—Marie and her son proceed to harangue the parliament—Proclamation of Marie de Medici as queen-regent of France—Surgical examination of the royal remains—Report of the surgeons—Ceremonies of the lying in state—The body of the king is removed to Nôtre Dame—The funeral procession—Grief of all classes of Frenchmen—Universal veneration for the memory and high deeds of Henri le Grand.

DURING the afternoon of Thursday, May 13th, queen Marie entered the abbey church of St. Denis, for the august ceremony of her coronation. Her majesty wore a robe of pale grey velvet, embroidered with gold *fleur-de-lis* spangled with diamonds. Her mantle was furred with ermine; the train, which was seven yards long, being borne by the dowager princess de Condé, the princess de Conty, and the duchesses de Montpensier and de Mercœur. The young dauphin and his brother M. d'Anjou preceded their royal mother, holding the lappets of her robe. "The spectators," says an eyewitness, "were ravished with the pompous beauty of the spectacle, the gorgeous church,

the beautiful women, the throng of personages amounting to 8,000; but chiefly at the sight of the comely young dauphin, who, arrayed in a coat of cloth of silver, and wearing on his head a three-cornered cap, covered with jewels, preceded her majesty walking with royal grace and sprightliness." Marie walked between the cardinals de Gondy and de Sourdis. The procession was opened by ushers with maces, heralds, kettledrums, 200 Swiss guards, the gentlemen of the chamber, the knights of the order of St. Esprit, the lords in waiting, the chief nobles of the realm marching two and two, and the princes of the blood. The prince of Conty bore the crown; the duke de Vendôme the sceptre, and his brother M. le Chevalier the hand of Justice. The Queen was followed by her daughter Madame Royale;¹ the train of the young princess was carried by the dukes de Montmorency and de Longueville. Queen Marguerite walked next—"the daisy of Valois, alas, following a *fleur-de-lis* from Florence," moans the chronicler, while expatiating on the fallen majesty of the daughter of Henri II.² The queen wore a diadem of gold and diamonds: her surcoat was of crim-

¹ Elizabeth, afterwards queen of Spain.

² Godefroy, *Grand Cérém de France*, t. i., p. 556, et seq. *Journal de Henri IV.*, année 1610. De Thou, t. 15.—Hilarion de Coste.—*Vie de Louis, dix-huitième dauphin de France. Eloges des Dauphins de France.*

son velvet spangled with *fleur-de-lis*. Marguerite would joyfully have abstained from appearing at the ceremonial; but the request and desire of the king was urgent, that no omission or absence on her part should give the enemies of the realm an opportunity to assert that she was not convinced of the legality of the sentence of divorce pronounced between them by Clement VIII. Marguerite yielded with tears—for the ordeal was bitter; nevertheless, she bore up bravely, and her cordial and respectful homage to the queen insured for her ever afterwards the friendship and protection of Marie.¹ The dowager princess de Condé and Madame de Montpensier appeared in weeds of black crape, ornamented with jet: but they wore their coronets, as princesses of the blood. Marie was conducted to the platform of state raised in front of the high altar, upon which stood a throne and canopy of violet velvet. The king, meantime, placed himself in a glazed pew, which on one side opened on to the platform, and on the other commanded the altar. His majesty attentively surveyed the scene, commenting on its splendour, and remarking sorrowfully the absence of Madame de Condé. When Marie ascended the steps of her throne, her comely countenance beaming with gratified

¹ Dupleix—Hist. de France, p. 403.

pride and majesty, Henry however, exclaimed, "that he had never seen the queen look better; and that she was the handsomest woman in the abbey." During the ceremony his majesty moved restlessly amongst the various personages present—sometimes laughing and jesting at the expense of Queen Marguerite and the officiating prelate cardinal de Joyeuse—the one, for having risen so early; the other for his long fast; but often wearing so sad an expression of countenance, that Sully seemed justified in asserting "*que c'étoit un spectacle qui perçoit le cœur du roi.*"¹ The cardinal de Joyeuse performed the ceremony of the anointing and crowning: and the royal diadem was placed on the queen's brow amid salvoes of artillery, and the homage of the spectators. This crown was afterwards removed on account of its weight, and a smaller diadem substituted, which was placed on her majesty's head by the young dauphin. As the queen returned to her throne, the crown tottered; and she hastily raised her hand to replace it on her head.² Marie afterwards de-

¹ Mem. de Sully, livre 27ème. Mercure François, t. 1.

² Mathieu—Hist. de la Mort de Henri IV.—"Le cœur de la reine demeura triste et affligé, comme prophète de quelque mal. Le ciêrge de la reine aussi s'eteignit de soy-même—qui furent choses prises et remarquées a St. Denis pour mauvais augure."—Mathieu, *ibid.*

clared that the accident occurred from her own preoccupation of mind—"as I walked from that majestic altar, the thought overpowered me that I could be thus honoured but twice in this church—the first honour I was then enjoying—the last will be given me at my burial, when it shall please God to summon me."¹ The queen received the Holy Eucharist in both kinds about three o'clock. During this part of the service, the king appearing to see imperfectly, the duke de Montbazon officiously dashed the hilt of his sword through the glazed partition of the royal pew; and the broken glass fell on the heads of several bishops who occupied seats beneath the oratory. Henry sharply chided the duke; and afterwards apologised to the reverend prelates. By four o'clock the benediction was given, and *largesse* proclaimed. Coronation medals were also liberally distributed. The medal bore the effigy of the queen; and was pronounced to be an excellent portrait. The reverse displayed a royal crown, from which sprang branches of laurel, of palm, and of olive—the exergue bore the inscription *Seculi Felicitas*. The queen was then escorted back to her chamber by the duke de Guise and his brother M. de Chevreuse.²

¹ Mathieu.

² "Quand la reine se leva de son trône, l'humilité se retira toute en son cœur, et ne laissa que la douceur en ses

The royal pair met at the door of their saloon, and after many affectionate demonstrations, the queen, who had not on that solemn day broken her fast, retired. Henry supped also at St. Denis; and his spirits revived while listening to the affectionate congratulations of his friends. Their majesties returned the same evening to Paris, the king entertaining Marie, *en route*, with a relation of a sharp contest of words between the ambassadors of Spain and Venice;¹ which, however, owing to the dexterity of the nuncio, had not disturbed the ceremony.

After her arrival at the Louvre, Marie remained for some hours in conference with the chief personages of her household, on the preparations making for the pageant of her entry into Paris, which was fixed for the following Sunday, May 17th. During the preceding week Henry had been heard to say:—"I will go and sleep at St. Denis on the 12th of May—I shall return thence on Thursday; on Friday I will hold council; on Saturday

yeux. Sa majesté parût sur elle, et autour d'elle d'une façon si auguste et vénérable qu'en marchant il sembloit de voir, non une reine, mais une déesse, et ce fut lors que le roy dit que cela estoit vraiment faire la royne!" Mathieu.

¹ The Venetian ambassador persisted in addressing the Spanish ambassador as "votre seigneurie," instead of giving him the title of "votre excellence."

I will have a joust; on Sunday my wife shall make her entry into Paris; on Monday the wedding of my daughter de Vendôme shall be celebrated; on Tuesday—the banquet; and on Wednesday—to horse!” Before he retired to rest the king saluted his wife affectionately; and drank from a cup of spiced wine, always presented to her majesty before her *coucher*. The king rose at five on the morning of Friday—the fatal 14th of May; having passed a restless night. In his cabinet he found the young duke de Vendôme, who had been agitated by the written prediction of a certain astrologer, La Brosse by name, which he found on his table after his return from St. Denis—to wit, that the constellations under which his majesty was born threatened him with a great danger on the fourteenth of May—therefore, that the king would show prudence by passing the day in retirement. “La Brosse is a crafty old fox, who wants to make money; and you, sir, are a young fool to believe such nonsense. My days are in the hands of God!” replied the king, half-jestingly.¹ M. de Vendôme, however, continued to feel so discomposed, that he waited upon the queen,

¹ Journal de Henri IV., année 1610. Abregé de la Vie de Henry le Grand,—Mem. de Nevers, t. 11, p. 895.

and informed her of the prediction; and implored her to use her influence to induce the king not to show himself in public until the next day. The king, when he retired to perform his private devotions, showed more than usual anxiety for privacy. Some one interrupted him with the announcement that M. de Villeroy waited without. "Alas! alas! people seem ever on the alert to hinder and disturb me when I am performing my duty," said Henry with a sigh. Villeroy obtained audience at seven; and a conversation ensued on state matters, his final decision upon which Henry postponed till the afternoon, at the council summoned to meet at the Tuileries. At eight o'clock, Henry, accompanied by M. de Vendôme and others, proceeded to the monastery Des Feuillants to hear mass. The assassin at that early hour already lurked at the portal of the Louvre; and stepped forwards to strike, as the king passed on foot through the wicket into the court-yard of the Louvre.¹ A sudden movement of the duke de Vendôme, on whose shoulder the king's hand rested, however, prevented his approach; but the wild gestures of Ravail-lac, who had been crouching on the benches placed in an outer court for the accommodation of lackeys, attracted so much attention, that

¹ Ibid.

he was summarily ejected from the precincts of the palace. Ravaillac was then paying his fourth visit to Paris; and had made himself well acquainted with the localities of the capital, and with the hours and usual modes of progress of the king. There seems no reason to doubt the fact that he was, or had been, in the service of Epernon, who was governor of the province of Angoulême, of which Ravaillac was a native. Like Jacques Clement, he was prompted to the regicidal deed by religious mania, and by the strong delusion of pretended visions; and by the persuasion that Henry, still a Calvinist at heart, was going forth, in the mightiness of his power, to overthrow the orthodox thrones of Europe; and to overrun, by his armies, under the heretic Lesdiguières, the patrimony of St. Peter. Throughout his miserable life, Ravaillac seems to have been subject to periodical fits of insanity:—his mind always remained gloomy and excitable; and was moved only by a craving for notoriety. The prosperity of the Huguenot population stirred his wrath; which, with the report that Henry intended to coerce the Holy See, and again to decree the banishment of the Jesuits, caused him to resolve upon the immediate death of the king. The more secret influences at work to lash the brain of this unhappy man to frenzy were never positively ascertained. A regency

was likely to be hailed by many of the chief courtiers, who wearied of the iron rule and favour of Sully. Many who aspired to influence in politics, felt themselves ciphers at the council table—compelled to implicit deference to the decrees of the minister; and, moreover, found themselves even deprived of the solace of backstair influence. The princes of the blood were discontented:—Condé was an exile; Conty despised; Soissons exasperated by petty slights, and jealous of the favour and riches of Henry's illegitimate sons. That the pending war provoked little sympathy from the masses of the king's subjects; and that its objects and motives were fully comprehended only by Henry himself, with Sully and Villeroy, was a truth not to be denied. France gloriously reposed, decked with the laurels of her king; she was orthodox; loyal to the Holy See; at peace with Spain; and in friendly alliance with her great rival, England. One party alone was dissatisfied in the state—and to the Calvinist population only, could war bring ameliorations or extension of privilege. The motives of the king, therefore, were calumniated: the old appeal to the religious passions of the people was again raised; murmurs became rife, and the assassin grasped his weapon with more fervid fanaticism and self-devotion. “The grand point to be ascertained is, whether Henry was, indeed, a very

Christian king!—whether the Lord owned him for his captain—whether the Holy Father contemplated his deeds, and pronounced them very blessed!” exclaimed Ravaiillac during his interrogatory, when reproached for his criminal treachery in slaying the anointed of Heaven.

Henry, at the conclusion of mass in the chapel of the Feuillantine convent, went to inspect the mausoleum which was there being constructed by the family of Bassompierre. Over the portal of the chapel was the versicle from the psalms—“*Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus que retribuit mihi?*” Turning to Bassompierre, the king said, “Bassompierre, add the words :—*Calicem salutis accipiam.*” M. de Guise, complimenting his majesty on the prompt rejoinder, Henry replied, “You know me not : when I am gone hence my deeds and my character may be better appreciated.”¹ On his return to the Louvre, Henry dined, and afterwards sent for his two eldest daughters, Elizabeth and Christine, and embraced them affectionately. He then entered his closet with MM. Jeannin and Arnaud, to discuss two financial decrees about to be presented to Parliament for registration. Henry then visited the queen.

¹ Bassompierre—*Journal de ma Vie*, p. 71. Mathieu—*Hist. de la Mort de Henri IV. Hist. de la Mère et du Fils.*

He found her majesty's apartments full of courtiers; and her ante-rooms crowded by persons who waited to receive final orders, relative to her entry into Paris on the following Sunday. The duchess de Guise laughed and jested with the king; who walked uneasily from chamber to chamber, declaring that he was going to visit Madame de Conty—and then, that his presence was required at the Tuileries and at the Arsenal. M. de Vitry presently entered, and joined with the queen in praying his majesty to refrain from driving through the streets of the capital. Paris, he said, was crowded with strangers; while the streets were blocked up by the stages and scaffolding in process of erection for the decorations on the queen's entry. The king then carelessly desired Vitry to go to the Palais, and inspect and report on the progress of the preparations going forwards for the banquet, ballet, and masque, with which, on the Sunday, he was to entertain his good Parisians. Vitry bluffly declined; adding, that his services would be required to escort his majesty, as there was great confusion in the city. "Go, you are a flatterer," replied Henry, "and only want to stay with the women chattering here. Do what I say: for fifty years I have managed very well without the daily protection of my captain of the guard—and to-day I can still dis-

pense with it!"¹ Vitry thereupon unwillingly departed on his errand; and Henry, after some further discourse with the lords around, said, "that it was indeed necessary that he should go out; yet that some secret misgiving restrained him." "Do not leave us, sire," interposed the queen—"send to make the inquiries you wish!"² Henry, however, went to the window, and, stepping out on to the balcony, which was over the fountain court, asked in a loud voice whether his coach was ready below? On receiving a reply in the affirmative from a sentinel, he exclaimed, "*Mon Dieu!* what is it?"³ I do not know what ails me!" Henry then embraced the queen three times; and with visible effort quitted the apartment, speaking to Madame de la Châtre, and to the duchess de Mercœur, who was the last lady whom he addressed. Henry descended by a back staircase, and entered his coach at a quarter to four o'clock. He took the principal seat; and beckoned to the duke

¹ Mathieu—*Hist. de la Mort de Henri IV.* De Thou, liv. 15ème. Dupleix.

² The queen said: "*Vous ne pouvez partir d'ici; demeurez, je vous supplie, vous parlerez demain à M. de Sully.*"—*Hist. de la Mère et du Fils*—published under the name of Mezerai, but written by the cardinal de Richelieu.

³ The assassin is said to have exclaimed, when he heard the voice of the king—"Je te tiens; tu es perdu!"

d'Épernon to sit at his right. *Vis-à-vis* to his majesty were the marquises de Liancour and de Mirabeau, lords-in-waiting on duty. The marshals de Lavardin and de Roquelaure placed themselves on the right seat against the door; and the duke de Montbazon, and the marquis de la Force on the left. The equerry in waiting, M. de St. Michel, then asked his majesty where the coachman should drive? "Anywhere; only get out of this place as quickly as you can," replied Henry, pointing to the vaulted archway under which the coach stood. The king, accompanied by a small detachment of guards, then drove from the palace. Opposite the hôtel de Longueville, Henry dismissed all his attendants, with the exception of the noblemen in the coach, and MM. de St. Michel, de Courtemers and Belencourt, officers of the body-guard, and two running footmen, whose duty it was to precede and herald the approach of the royal equipage. The coach entered the Rue St. Honoré, and from thence turned into the Rue de la Ferromnière, *en route* for the Arsenal. M. de Sully was indisposed, from the opening of the wound on the jaw and neck received, soon after the accession of the king, in a skirmish near to Mantes;¹ and Henry, consequently, had

¹ See first part of this History—Henri IV and the League, vol. i.

not seen his minister since his return from St. Denis. The street was narrow, and was rendered still more impassable by the erection of a number of booths and stalls for the sale of fancy wares leaning on to the wall of the Cimetière des Innocents, which extended nearly the length of the street. The royal equipage was obliged to draw up soon after entering the street close to this wall, to allow of the passage of two heavily-laden carts—one of which was filled with barrels of wine; and the other with a load of hay. One of the footmen then went forward to clear the streets from future obstruction; and the other retired behind the coach, and stopped to tie his garter. A footpath of about three feet broad intervened between the royal carriage and the wall of the cemetery. Ravallac, meanwhile, had stealthily followed the coach from the Louvre, resolved to find opportunity for the perpetration of his crime. The king had drawn a paper from his bosom,¹ which, after slightly glancing over, he gave to the duke d'Épernon, and placed his hand on the duke's neck, to peruse the writing with him. His majesty's left arm rested on the shoulder of M. de Montbazon,²

¹ The paper was a letter from the count de Soissons, detailing his grievances.

² The words addressed by the king to Montbazon were reported by the duke to have been the following: "Au retour de l'Arsenal je vous ferai voir le dessein que

to whom he was whispering when the assassin came up to the coach. The king's back was, therefore, turned to the narrow causeway: the sides of the carriage were open; for Henry, in order the better to inspect the preparations for the queen's entry, had caused the leather curtains to be raised before he quitted the Louvre. Ravaillac walked steadily along¹ the narrow causeway, his cloak thrown around his shoulders, and carrying his hat in his hand, so as to conceal the long knife with which he was armed. When close to the royal carriage, he sprang upon the wheel, and struck the king, plunging his knife between the second and third ribs. The king threw up his arms, and exclaimed, "I am wounded; but it is nothing."² The last words were scarcely uttered, when he received a second stab, which pierced his side, under the fifth rib. The assassin proceeded to strike a third blow with great rapidity, which caught and ripped up the sleeve of the duke de Montbazon's habit. The horror and consternation of the personages around the king was indescribable. The duke d'Épernon raised the king in his

d'Écures a fait pour le passage de mon armée: vous en serez fort content; et j'en ai reçu un grand contentement."

¹ Ce misérable tout suant et eschauffé se coule au long de ces boutiques.—Mathieu.

² "Le sang lui vint a gros flots par la bouche."—Ibid.

arms: the blood rushed in a torrent from Henry's mouth and side—he clasped his hands, made one convulsive effort to speak, and fell back in the coach with a groan, and expired. A silence of a few seconds ensued; at last the duke de Montbazon exclaimed, “The king is dead!”¹

The street soon resounded with tumult and shrieks: for the people gathered as if smitten by a presentiment of the calamity, and blocked up the avenues from the rue St. Honoré, and surrounded the carriage. St. Michel, one of the king's gentlemen, threw himself with drawn sword on the miserable assassin, who made no effort to escape; but stood leaning against the wall, with a face of ghastly hue, grasping the fatal knife from the blade of which the blood dripped, and mingled in the stream which poured from the carriage.² The count de Curson struck him on the throat with the hilt of his sword. “Let no one touch the assassin! on your life refrain!”

¹ The exiled duke d'Aumale, who professed to be well acquainted with the intricacies of the regicidal plot, states that Epernon himself drew a dagger from his vest, and gave the king the fatal stroke, after two attempts to kill the latter had been made by Ravaiillac. He also stated that Montbazon saw the act; and was prevented from disclosing it by the veto of the queen regent, and other powerful personages.

² De Thou, Mathieu, Dupleix, Etoile, Sully, Bassompierre, Perefice, Sauval, Gerard, Mezerai.

exclaimed Epernon. "The king is not dead, but has fainted!" "*Il faut que l'assassin meure! Tue! Tue!*" broke forth in hoarse shouts from the bystanders. In a few seconds the wretched regicide would have been torn limb from limb; but, after a sharp struggle, La Pierre one of the footmen, and others, rescued and delivered him over to M. de Montigny, who by mere chance happened to be patrolling, attended by two soldiers, in the adjacent rue St. Honoré. Ravallac exhibited no symptoms of fear: indeed, he exulted in the success of his crime—"The king is at last dead," said he to the soldiers who took him. "I pitched into his body with my knife, as I might have done into a truss of hay!" M. de Liancour presently left the royal carriage, and proceeded to the hôtel de Ville; and M. de Courtemer, at the request of M. de la Force, departed to apprise Sully of the catastrophe. Meantime, a cry for wine for the restoration of his majesty arose, as the people observed that the king continued motionless; and while several of the bystanders went in search of some, the duke d'Epernon caused the curtains of the coach to be closed, and ordered the coachman to drive back to the Louvre. The face of the king was first reverently covered by the marquis de la Force; then all the noblemen alighted, and followed the coach on foot to

the palace. Montigny and his soldiers, escorting the assassin, followed. A great crowd attended the coach: sobs, groans, and execrations breaking from the lips of the strongest men, and mingling with shrill clamours for vengeance.

The gates of the Louvre stood wide open, the mournful tidings having already arrived; and Vitry, with a face convulsed with emotion, advanced to receive his beloved master. Some of the royal surgeons and physicians were already in attendance; and under their directions the body of the king was carried by the duke de Montbazon, Vitry, the marquis de Noirmoutier, and one of the equerries named Suilly, into his majesty's private cabinet, and laid upon a small, low bed.¹ Life was extinct; though some of the noblemen around deposed that the king heaved a sigh, and opened his eyes, when his physician Petit, after examining the fatal wound, exclaimed, "Sire, commend yourself to God! Oh! say in your heart, 'Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!'"² The death of the king must have been instantaneous: the heart was pierced; and the flow of blood from the mouth, according to the

¹ Mathieu, De Thou, Hist. de la Vie du duc d'Epemon—Gerard.

² Ibid—Mathieu—Hist de la Mort de Henri IV., p. 70.

testimony of the physician, caused instant suffocation. The tumult round the palace was meantime allayed by rumours purposely diffused, that Henry had revived, and that his wounds might not prove fatal. The courts, the saloons, and vast halls of the Louvre were speedily thronged by gentlemen, who repaired from all parts of the capital to learn the truth. Bassompierre, and the dukes de Guise and de Bellegarde, heard of the regicidal deed at the Arsenal from St. Michel and Courtemer, where, by Henry's orders, they had gone to await him. "We rushed like madmen from the Arsenal," relates M. de Bassompierre¹. "I seized the first horse I met, and rode to the Louvre. I met M. de Belancourt in front of the hôtel de Longueville: he said, 'The king is dead!' I proceeded to the barriers raised before the palace, and found them guarded by French and Swiss troops, with crossed halberts. M. le Grand and myself hastened to the cabinet where the king lay. M. de Vie sat on the bed, he had placed the cross of the Order on the lips of the king, and was exhorting him to commend himself to God. Milon, his majesty's first physician, stood weeping in the alcove; while surgeons were probing and examining the wound. But he was gone! M.

¹ Bassompierre—*Journal de ma Vie*, p. 71.

Milon exclaimed, ‘Helas! it is all over—he has passed away!’ M. de Bellegarde then threw himself on his knees, and seized the king’s hand, which he kissed. I embraced his feet, weeping bitter tears. M. de Guise also embraced the body; and we remained thus, until Catherine,¹ the queen’s tirewoman, came to summon us to attend her majesty.”

Queen Marie, meanwhile, after the departure of the king, had continued to grant audiences in her cabinet to all ladies whose rank entitled them to take part in the procession of the ensuing Sunday; her majesty being attended by her *grande maitresse* Madame la Marechâle de la Châtre, and the duchesses de Guise and de Mercœur *dames du palais*, and by Madame Concini. About a quarter past four o’clock, the queen was alarmed by the sounds of a loud uproar without; and by the intelligence that the avenues to the palace were thronged by people. A few minutes elapsed, and the noise and murmur of tongues spread to the adjacent corridors of the palace. The queen anxiously approached the window, from which half an hour previously the king had called for his coach. The sound of the heavy roll of wheels, the clash of arms, and the wail of multitudes, caused the queen in a few

¹ Signora Caterina Selvaggio.

minutes to retire from the window in alarm. Marie opened the door of her cabinet; and advanced along the corridor, towards the grand staircase. The first person she met was M. de Souvré governor to the young princes, who, running at full speed, did not at first recognize her majesty, until Marie inquired, in an agitated voice, "What was the matter? and whether her young son M. d'Orleans was ill or dead?" Souvré knelt, and kissing the queen's hand, replied, that M. d'Orleans was well; but that the king had been wounded by the knife of an assassin, and was then being brought to the palace. Marie pushed Souvré from her; and without a word continued her way towards the apartments of her royal consort. The din, the cries, the tumult below, and the supplications of Souvré, at length induced her majesty to pause:—she uttered a cry of anguish, and suffered herself to be led back to her chamber. A quarter of an hour of agonizing suspense ensued; the door of the apartment was then opened, and the chancellor de Sillery entered. Marie was standing near the door, apparently about to leave her chamber for the second time in search of intelligence. She seized the hand of the chancellor—"Monsieur, the king! This tumult—is the king dead?" Sillery, much moved, replied in a faltering voice—"Madame, be calm I entreat—pardon me, the king can

never die—behold the King!” And stepping aside the chancellor pointed to the young Louis, who with his face bedewed with tears, rushed into his mother’s arms, sobbing aloud. Marie mingled her sobs with those of her son. Sillery allowed a few minutes thus to elapse; he then said—“Madame, put on the armour of courage and resignation—stay your tears; act as he who is gone would prescribe. You have lost a great and glorious king—weep and bewail for him from the bottom of your heart, but never forget that you are the mother and guardian of an infant king, whose realm must be governed by you. This high and holy responsibility requires calmness, fortitude and prudence. Madame, you must command your feelings, and hold council on what is to be done in this deplorable extremity!”¹ — By order of the chancellor, therefore, all members of the privy-council, and of the council of state then in the Louvre, were assembled. Sillery, aware of the excitable disposition of Marie de Medici, feared to leave her to the condolences of her women, before necessary orders were issued for the safety of the realm. The

¹ De Thou, t. 15, p. 90. Journal de Henri IV.—Etoile, année 1610 (supplément MS.). The young Louis cried in heartrending tones, “qu’il voulait aller voir son père.”—The dauphin was out in the streets of Paris when the king was wounded. H. de Coste. Eloge des Dauphins de France.

dukes de Guise, Bellegarde, and M. de Bassompierre were therefore summoned. "We found her majesty," says the latter, "reclining on a sofa in her closet, in extreme affliction, and having beside her, M. le chancelier, and M. de Villeroy."¹

The duke de Sully had just left his bath, when he heard a great confusion in his house—the sound of many voices, the cries and lamentations of women, and, above all, the voice of the duchess his wife exclaiming in anguish, "Ah! France is ruined! Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! all is lost!" "I left my room in haste," writes the duke, "and was greeted by the announcement, 'Ah! monsieur, the king is dangerously wounded!'" At the same moment St. Michel made his appearance, and gave fatal confirmation to the report. He, moreover, presented to Sully the knife, which he had snatched from the hand of the criminal.² Overwhelmed with horror, the duke retired back to his apartment: the suddenness of the blow, and his own perilous position, seem for some hours to have shaken his shrewd wisdom. The duke's policy, it is said, ought to have been to present himself at the Louvre, in the character of protector and guide to

¹ Bassompierre—*Journal de ma Vie*.

² *Mém. de Sully*, liv. 27^{ème}.—"Ah, m'criai-je voila ce que ce pauvre prince avait toujours appréhendé; O mon Dieu! ayez compassion de lui!"

the regent and her son ; instead of permitting Sillery, Epernon and others, his bitter foes, to profit by the sorrowful juncture.¹ Sully, it is argued, was certain of welcome at the palace : he had possession of the Bastille, and was commander-in-chief of the artillery, and keeper of the royal treasure. The duke issued from his cabinet, after the lapse of an hour, looking very pale, but collected : after some further time given to reflection, he summoned his servants, and mounted on horseback to repair to the Louvre, “to see if a breath of life still remained in his beloved master.” His retinue consisted of more than one hundred noblemen and servants ; the former having assembled at the Arsenal to consult the once puissant minister. In the rue de la Pourpointerie a note was handed to Sully by a stranger, warning him not to enter the Louvre, for the conspiracy was aimed at other lives besides that of the king—“If you’ go to the Louvre you will not escape, but will share the king’s fate !” The duke nevertheless calmly continued his progress, encouraged by the

¹ The cardinal de Richelieu, in l’Histoire de la Mère et du Fils, terms Sully’s caution “une faute,” and attributes it to his fear of his enemies, who were numerous and powerful, and from the little reliance he could place in the queen. It is stated that the duchess de Sully repaired to the Louvre to apologize for the absence of her husband, who was prostrated by the catastrophe.

sympathy with which he was received by the people; many of whom cast themselves before him, weeping and lamenting the fatal blow which not only deprived the king of life, but had pierced the hearts of all true Frenchmen. In the rue St. Antoine Sully met Bassompierre and a troop of cavaliers, they having received orders from Epernon to perambulate the streets of the capital to preserve peace. The duke, as Bassompierre relates, began to exhort him, in a tearful voice, to be faithful to the young king, and to avenge the foul murder of Henry IV. "Monsieur," replied Bassompierre, "our present business is to exhort others: and we need no admonition to perform obligations so manifestly our duty!"¹ It was long since the favoured minister had listened to language so disrespectful; he turned abruptly away and continued his route. The next personage he met was M. de Vitry, who exhibited frantic grief, but lost all self-command when he was accosted by the duke. He advised the minister not to present himself at the Louvre attended by so large a cavalcade—"You will not be allowed to enter—there is still something to be developed: my advice to you is to return from whence you came. There is plenty of work for you, without going to the

¹ Bassompierre—*Journal de ma Vie*. Mem. de Sully, liv. 27ème. Mem. pour servir à l'Histoire de France.

Louvre!"¹ Sully's fears echoed the caution prescribed: the Louvre swarmed with his bitter enemies—Epermon, Villeroy, Sillery, and Concini and his wife, were in the ascendant. The king was an infant, and the queen offended and alienated. The duke was too precious and powerful as a hostage for the success of any conspiracy to be allowed to retire from the Louvre as he came. Probably Sully suspected the intricate treason; and knew its agents and motives. One of the first personages to join the queen at the Louvre, and to gloat over the remains of the murdered king, was the Spanish ambassador. Spain had pronounced the dauphin illegitimate: Spain at that time harboured M. de Condé, heir to the throne in case of the failure of the legitimate royal line. The Spanish cabinet also had recorded its persuasion that the son of Henriette de Balzac was the true successor of Henri Quatre. Sully, therefore, instead of seeking the presence of the queen, retired to the Bastille; and in that stronghold he resolved to await events, keeping guard over the treasure of the state. This resolve, which has been decried as an instance of extreme pusillanimity, and a gross dereliction of duty, does not on examination seem so reprehensible: an unseen hand struck the blow which

¹ Ibid.

deprived France of her king; no regency had as yet been proclaimed; and events then passing in Paris were so rapidly organized and acted upon, as to inspire strong suspicion that they had not been totally unforeseen. Had Sully refrained from two measures, dictated in the anguish and alarm of the moment, his enemies could scarcely have converted this retreat into a crime. To provide for the support of the garrison of the Bastille in case the fortress should be besieged, Sully sent and seized the bread and flour in the bakers' shops of the capital. This mandate expedited, he despatched an express to his son-in-law M. de Rohan, who was with the army of Champagne, desiring him to march without delay into Paris with the six thousand Swiss under his banner.¹ These acts, which, under one contingency, might have been pronounced loyal and politic, were capable of the darkest interpretation, especially as the queen sent the duke de Guise, the same evening, to invite Sully to conference; a command which the duke respectfully declined, under the pleas of illness and of agitation of spirit.

The duke d'Épernon, meanwhile, acted with an imperious authority, which must have re-

¹ Le Vassor—Hist. de Louis XIII. Sully, liv. 27^eme. Mathieu. Duplex.

called to his remembrance the palmy days of the early part of the reign of Henry III, when the king himself hardly presumed to command in his Louvre. Epernon, Bellegarde, Bassompierre, and Sillery, the most devoted and influential of Marie's partisans, had resolved to proclaim the regency of the queen absolute, and unfettered by any of the wise restrictions by which Henry had sought to neutralize his consort's caprice and want of judgment. At six o'clock in the evening, the king's death was not universally known throughout the capital: and all was affright, foreboding, and expectation. The first order issued by Marie and her allies, directed Vitry to assemble the young princes and princesses in a chamber of the Louvre, and to place sentinels at the windows and doors: the king remained with his mother. All the governors of provinces were next assembled, and took oaths of allegiance to the king, in the presence of the chancellor. Bassompierre and the duke de Guise were directed to seek up the nobles, in and about the palace; and to perambulate with them the streets of the capital, and to proclaim that the king, although dangerously wounded, was not dead. The queen sent a mandate to le Jay, and Sanguin provosts of the city, commanding that the gates of the capital should be locked, and the keys deposited at the hôtel de Ville: also that no

persons, or detachments of armed men, should be suffered to enter, or to quit Paris. The troops quartered in the faubourgs were marched to the vicinity of the Louvre, and stationed on the Pont Neuf, along the rue Dauphine, and in the vicinity of the Great Augustinian Monastery, in which the parliament held its *séance*; the members having temporarily vacated the Palais, on account of the preparations for the banquet and festivities which were to celebrate the entry of her majesty into Paris. All these streets and squares were in a short space occupied by soldiers; there seemed no delay—no confusion:—the order for the advance of the regiments was despatched by Epernon—each battalion took possession of its post after first saluting the duke, who armed *cap-à-pi'* appeared on horseback. < Three hours after the demise of the king, Paris was in the hands of the partisans and friends of Marie de Medici.¹

The share which the queen took in these preparations was never precisely known. Amid the wild and vague charges levelled at the most influential personages of France, no one fact bringing home the assassination of Henri Quatre to their direct agency was unravelled.

¹ Mathieu. De Thou, Hist. de la Mère et du Fils. Dupleix, Mem. pour servir à l'Histoire de France, année 1610.—L'Etoile, Journal de Henri Quatre.—Le Vassor, Vie de Louis XIII., t. I.

The queen, madame de Verneuil, and the duke d'Epemon fell under suspicion, inasmuch as each of these personages, it was averred, had direct and palpable interest in the demise of the king. The after-fate of Marie de Medici and the neglect with which she was treated seem peculiarly cruel; but the accusation against Louis XIII. of base ingratitude towards his mother and the guardian of his crown, can hardly be sustained, if circumstances afterwards came to his knowledge, through Vitry and other devoted friends of Henri IV., showing that the queen was an accomplice, or even a passive abettor of the crime which bereft France of her glorious king. After the violent death of Concini, an instinct of self-preservation may have induced the young king to adopt the measures which, as they now stand in the page of history, sully the annals of his reign. It has been said that the wife and the mistress were not likely to combine to assassinate the king. Henriette nevertheless had potent interest to propitiate the queen:—she desired protection and permission to espouse the duke de Guise; while these two women had now a joint outrage to avenge—the passion felt by Henry for the princess de Condé. These facts being well known to the Spanish ambassador, may have inspired and encouraged the cabinet of Madrid to propose to arrest these evils; and to anticipate the ruin and the overthrow of the imperial power

of the Austrian Hapsburgs, by the assassination of the king.

The tidings of the fatal deed reached the parliament of Paris during its afternoon session. The communication was made by the attorney-general Servin,¹ who declared that he was then still ignorant whether the king was dead. The chambers suspended business; and resolved to send deputies to the Louvre to ascertain the true facts; and, meantime, the members agreed not to disperse. The condition of the capital was critical, supposing that the recovery of his majesty was even probable. A spark of sedition would have delivered Paris to fire and pillage. The animosities between Catholic and Huguenot; the suspicion current as to the assassination of the king, the extreme fury of the people, and the avidity ever manifested by a mob for pillage, were sources of extreme anxiety. A seditious movement could easily have been excited, for the burghers were armed; and had been daily called to muster for a month past, to prepare the corps for their part of the public ceremonial of the queen's entry into Paris. The deputies chosen by parliament to proceed to the Louvre were le Bret and Servin: before the departure of these personages, the crisis seemed still more alarm-

¹ "Servin, avocat-general, arriva, la tristesse peinte sur son visage, et annonça qu'il apportait de facheuses nouvelles." De Thou, vol. 15.

ing. The first president de Harlay arrived borne in a litter, having just risen from a sick bed to meet the chambers, and to direct their discussions. De Harlay had been informed by a message from the queen of the true state of affairs; and had been conjured by the royal envoy Dolé, to repair to his post before a communication which her majesty was about to send to the chambers, arrived. The deputies were introduced without delay into the presence of queen Marie, who received them drowned in tears. After some little period given to condolences and grief, her majesty said that she expected the chambers to proceed to deliberate on the regency; that affairs were urgent; that orders must be given to the governors of the realm, lest the deplorable assassination of the king might plunge the kingdom into trouble; that the chamber in its wisdom knew the rights and prerogatives of the mother of the reigning king; especially as the deceased king had indicated his royal will by appointing her to the regency of the realm during his contemplated campaign.¹ Servin and le Bret were then conducted into the chamber where the body of the king lay. All vestiges of the crime had been carefully removed from the body, which was arrayed in a suit of black satin; upon the king's breast rested the badge of the order of the Holy

¹ Journal de Henri IV. Mathieu, Hist. de la Mort

Ghost. At the side of the couch knelt the archbishop d'Embrun, reciting prayers from *l'Office des Morts*, and other ecclesiastics knelt around. The chamber was lighted by tapers; there were present, M. de Mayenne, M. de Bellegarde, and M. de Bassompierre. The duke de Montbazon knelt at the foot of the couch, with Vitry; the chancellor de Sillery stood close to the pillow. The royal physicians, and the gentlemen of the chamber, and some of Henry's favourite servants, were likewise present. Servin approached, and, kneeling, raised Henry's hand to his lips, pronouncing at the same time a eulogium on the virtues and kingly qualities of the deceased. Sillery then said, addressing the deputies, "that the laws of the realm, precedent, and the records of the state showed that the regency of the realm, and the guardianship of the person of the infant king, had been invariably conceded to the queen-mother. That the royal council was of that opinion: therefore, he called imperatively on the High Court to confirm and approve of this decision, which was in strict accord with the will and intent of their late beloved and glorious monarch."¹

de Henri IV. De Thou, vol. 15. Dupleix, Vie de Marie de Medici.—Dreux du Radier. Le Vassor—Hist. de Louis XIII. Bassompierre, Journal de ma Vie.

¹ Matthieu—De Thou. Hist. de la Mère et du Fils. Le Vassor—Hist. de Louis XIII.

The deputies then retired—convinced that the assent of the chambers was asked as an empty form, the regency question having already been decided by the queen's partisans. This opinion was not mitigated when they surveyed the military force which surrounded the Louvre,—the streets being occupied by soldiers; while regiments encircled the monastery wherein the parliament debated. During the mission of the deputies, the members had resumed their places, and sat in silent expectation awaiting their report. The assembly rose when Servin and le Bret appeared. Their communication was received with sighs and groans. Whilst the members were thus solacing their grief, the doors of the chamber opened, and the duke d'Epernon entered. He remained covered, in defiance of the usual etiquette, and carried his sword sheathed in his hand. The duke advanced to the tribune of the first president, who, amazed at so abrupt an interruption of the deliberations of the chamber, rose; but presently invited the duke to take a seat, in his capacity of a peer of France. "No, Monsieur le Premier," replied Epernon, roughly; "I am here by command of the queen, who is anxious to learn the result of your deliberations!"¹ A few moments elapsed: again the folding

¹ Gerard—Vie du duc d'Epernon. De Thou.

doors of the chamber opened with a shock ; and the duke de Guise appeared, in an attitude as threatening to the independence of the pending discussion. Guise advanced to the chair of the president, and bowing, significantly declared, "that he was there to offer his services and his sword to the king, the queen-regent, and to the parliament." "Monsieur, you give proof thereby of a grateful heart, the noble heritage which you have received from your ancestors. The registers of this august parliament will testify to posterity the dutiful action which you now fulfil. France, nevertheless, expects from you, that the province confided to your government may respond to the devotion which you manifest. Provide, therefore, that nothing occurs therein contrary to the welfare of the realm." Guise replied that he had so provided by the despatch of his lieutenant to Aix. "Monsieur, the queen, nevertheless, ardently desires to be informed of the result of your deliberations !" De Harlay replied that the chambers would despatch deputies to the Louvre, humbly to inform her majesty thereof. The dukes, thereupon, withdrew ;¹ though each of these noblemen placed himself at the head of

¹ As Epernon retired, he said, "que ce qu'il avoit proposé, étoit le mieux qu'on pouvoit faire, et qu'il falloit absolument et promptement s'y resoudre."—Mezerai, *Vie de Marie de Medici*.

his regiment of guards, which was stationed in the vicinity of the monastery.

A short discussion ensued: the chambers then voted unanimously for the regency of the queen, during his majesty's minority; and at nine o'clock, P.M., the presidents Potier, Segnier, and de Thou, with four counsellors of the court, and the attorney-general Servin, were deputed to bear the tidings to Marie de Medici. They were instantly admitted to the royal presence. The queen made a speech, in which she thanked the High Court for its diligence, its loyalty, and its fidelity to the crown under the present cruel affliction. Moreover, she prayed the honourable members assembled at the Augustinians to await the orders which she was about to despatch to them, as soon as she had consulted the council upon a matter which she was meditating. An hour elapsed—and then another, and still the members patiently kept vigil in the refectory of the monastery, and no tidings arrived from court. At length M. de Bullion presented himself; he was commissioned to thank the august parliament a second time in the name of the regent; and to inform the members, that the king, accompanied by her majesty and by the princes, would on the morrow hold a *lit de justice*. Her majesty, therefore, prayed the members to assemble, in order solemnly to confirm the decision they had just enounced,

for the government of the realm during the minority of Louis XIII.¹

During the night of the 15th of May the body of Henri Quatre was removed into a state chamber, and arrayed in royal robes, preparatory to the admission of the public to view the remains. From ten A.M. to six P.M. crowds of persons presented themselves; and many affecting incidents ensued. The body lay under a canopy of state—and around the *lit de parade* stood the chief officers of the realm, and of his majesty's household.² The chamber was visited when day broke by queen Marie, accompanied by the young king. Three hours later Sully entered alone, after his interview with the queen, which took place on that day, and spent some time in sorrowful contemplation by the side of the indulgent master, who had appreciated his fidelity, and whom he had served with unparalleled devotion. The duke had been summoned early from the Bastille by the duke de Guise, and introduced into the presence of Marie, who doubted the confirmation of her regency, so long as it should be unsanctioned by the concurrence of a servant so valued and trusted by the deceased king. The interview was affecting³—

¹ Ibid, Girard, Estoile, De Thou, Le Vassor, Dupleix, Mathieu, etc.

² Bassompierre—*Journal de ma Vie*, année 1610.

³ “Lorsque je me trouvai en presence de la reine, le

the queen wept with Sully, and placed her son in the arms of the veteran minister, commending him to the duke's protection. The duke however felt, despite the emotion evinced by her majesty, that his counsels would no longer guide the destinies of France—the sympathies of the queen, of Epernon, and Concini lay with Spain and Rome—and Sully foresaw the reactionary policy which they contemplated. He, however, attended their majesties to the chambers; and took his accustomed place on the right of the throne, as first minister of the crown. The queen, enveloped from head to foot in a veil of black crape, presented the young king to the assembled parliament, and requested for him the advice and protection of the High Court. The decree of the preceding day was then unanimously adopted; and Marie returned to her palace solemnly proclaimed and recognized as Queen-Regent of France.

On the night of Saturday the body of Henri Quatre was opened and embalmed by the royal surgeons, Petit, Milon, Herouard, Martel, Pigray, and Regnaud, and twenty-six other mem-

peu de constance dont je m'étais armé m'abandonna si absolument, que j'éclatois en cris et en sanglots. La reine ne retrouva plus elle-même cette force avec laquelle elle s'était préparée à me recevoir, et nous fîmes ensemble une scène qui dût paraître bien touchante," etc. Sully, liv. 27ème.

bers of the faculty.¹ The knife of the assassin had pierced the left lobe of the lungs, and divided the aorta; which injury the physicians deposed caused the instant death of the king. All the other parts of the king's body were vigorous and healthy, especially the heart, which was small, compact, and muscular.² The heart was enshrined in a silver urn, to be delivered to the Jesuit community of la Flèche; who deposited this precious relic of their illustrious benefactor in the church of the community, after enclosing it in a coffer of lead. The body was then placed in a leaden shell, which was enclosed in a coffin magnificently ornamented. A pall of cloth of gold covered the coffin, upon which were deposited on cushions the crown, the sceptre, and the insignia of the orders of St. Esprit, and of the Garter. Henry's valiant sword, unsheathed, was reverently laid at the foot of the bier. The royal remains lay thus in state in the Louvre for eighteen days, mass being said twice daily. All the lords of the household presented themselves to perform

¹ L'Estoile.—Bassompierre.

² “C'étoit le plus epais estomac, au rapport des medecins et chirurgiens, que l'on avoit vu. Il avoit le poulmon gauche un peu attaché aux côtes.” Bassompierre.—“Le corps du roi fut ouvert en présence de 26 medecins, qui lui trouvèrent toutes les parties si bien conditionnées, qu'il aurait pu vivre encore trente ans, selon le cours de la nature.”—Estoile.

their accustomed service: the royal repasts were duly served as usual; but the meats were distributed to the poor.

On the 29th of June the body of the king was transferred to the cathedral of Nôtre Dame. Twenty-eight heralds preceded the procession of the funeral cortége; during which and afterwards, in the Palais, before the famous marble table, the style and titles of the deceased monarch were thus proclaimed:

“Noble and devout persons! pray for the soul, and for the everlasting peace of the late high, mighty, and puissant Prince, Henri le Grand, king of France and Navarre—a monarch most Christian, most august, invincible, incomparable, magnanimous, and clement, ever to be revered and honoured!”

The corpse was placed on a magnificent catafalque raised before the high altar. The effigy of the king, arrayed in royal robes, rested on the coffin—and the pall was richly embroidered with heraldic devices, and with four shields emblazoned with the arms of France and Navarre. The funeral oration was pronounced by Philippe Cospeau bishop-elect of Aire, in the presence of the assembled court and parliament: services were simultaneously solemnized in all the churches and convent chapels of the capital. The bells tolled gloomily; and minute guns were fired from the Arsenal; business was suspended, and the

shops in Paris closed. The king and his mother passed the day and the following one in the deepest retirement: throughout the realm gloom and depression prevailed for the loss of the best of kings; and a general fast was ordered to propitiate the Divine favour, and to avert the chastisements of the wrath of God, manifest by so notable a judgment.¹

¹ Funerailles de Henri Quatre.—*Mercur*e François, t. 1. De Thou.—Mathieu.

CHAPTER IV.

1610.

Sensations produced throughout the realm by the lamented demise of the king—François Ravallac the Regicide—His trial and execution—Presumptive evidence concerning the assassination of Henri Quatre—Jacqueline le Voyer—Her depositions—The duke d'Epernon—His interview with de Harlay—Sentence pronounced on Le Voyer—Decree of the parliament of Paris—Madame de Verneuil—Effect of the demise of Henry on the sovereigns his allies—Funeral obsequies of Henri Quatre—Details and incidents of the ceremonial—Children of Henri Quatre and their alliances—Honage paid to the memory of Henri Quatre by Marguerite de Valois—Mottoes and device of Henri Quatre.

“LE ROY EST MORT !”—words which, as they

flashed through the capital and throughout France, produced indescribable woe. "No sound was heard but groans, tears, lamentations, and forebodings;"¹ popular fury clamoured for a victim; the people, in their fierce wrath and consternation, pressed for the destruction of the miserable agent of the crime which had destroyed their king, oblivious of the still greater criminals who had placed the regicidal knife in his hand.

François Ravaillac, after the murder of the king, was left at the hôtel de Retz, a prisoner in the keeping of Montigny and his archers; two days elapsed before he was committed to the Conciergerie, during which, it is alleged, by strange and culpable neglect, many persons were suffered to see and to converse with the prisoner. One disguised person, supposed to be le Père Cotton, was heard to give the culprit the emphatic admonition—"to suffer all things for the glory of God, but to compromise no person." The first and preliminary interrogatory of the prisoner was made three hours after the death of the king (May 14th), by the presidents Jeannin and de Courtin, but no fact was elicited. Ravaillac appeared stupefied by the magnitude of his crime; he maintained a dull and indifferent demeanour when before these magistrates, and drawled out

¹ Péréfixe—Hist. de Henri le Grand, p. 415.

his replies with half-closed eyes. Provoked at the demeanour of the culprit, one of the officers on guard, in accordance with the barbarous practices of the age, gave Ravaillac a severe blow on the head; and seizing his hand, pinched his thumb under the snap-haunce of an arquebuse.¹ The miserable criminal then stated that he had no accomplices; that the sermons of godly men had instructed him to discern the deeds which rendered it lawful to slay a king—and that a copy of verses, found on his person, and addressed to a criminal about to be led to execution, was not composed by himself, but by a burgher of Angoulême. As for a small reliquary found in his pocket, it was given to him by M. Guillebert, a canon of Angoulême; and it contained a fragment of the true cross, and was worn by him as a specific against fever.² Nothing further was elicited. On the 17th of May, Ravaillac was conducted to the Conciergerie,³ when his trial was hurried on with extraordinary speed; so much

¹ De Thou, t. 15, p. 95.

² The wood was wrapped in cotton wool, and shaped like a heart.—*Procès de Ravaillac*. *Mem. de Condé*, t. 6. *Mereure François*, t. 1, edited by Richer.

³ “Le prisonnier fut enfermé dans la Tour qu’on appelle de Montgomery; et dans icelle il fut assis et lié en une chaise, ayant les fers aux pieds, et les mains liées derrière le dos.”—*Journal du Règne de Henri IV.* p. 55, année 1610.

so, as in the opinion of de Harlay, first president, to defeat the ends of justice. The designs of the persons concerned in thus hastening the proceedings were unwittingly aided by popular exasperation; they hoped that with the condemnation of Ravaillac the affair would be hushed; that the necessity of the government—embarrassed by a foreign war, and by a party hostile in council—would connive at their escape; and gladly seize upon any incident which seemed to prove the innocence of personages so illustrious and important. The character of the queen regent was well-appreciated; great reliance was therefore placed on the workings of her timid but ambitious spirit; her want of political sagacity; and her impatience of temper, which had so often induced her majesty to make disgraceful compromise. On the 17th, Ravaillac was again brought before his judges—the first president, and his colleagues Potier, Jeannin, and Courtin. This inquiry lasted two days. The prisoner constantly maintained that he had no accomplices; and indeed had never confided his project to any person; the deed was perpetrated for the honour of God, and to promote the welfare of the church and the realm. He was refused access to the presence of the king to exhort him on the error of his ways, as shown to him in repeated visions and dreams; although he had solicited the inter-

vention of an equerry in the household of queen Marguerite, that of Madame d'Angoulême, of the cardinal du Perron, and that of the reverend father Cotton.¹ The prisoner signed the *procès verbal* of this examination thus : "RAVAILLAC—

Que toujours en mon cœur,
Jésus soit le vainqueur !²

From all parts of the country letters swarmed; some addressed to the queen, others to the parliament, containing plans for the torturing and the death of the unhappy culprit, so as to wring confession from his lips. One individual, a butcher of Angers, proposed to the queen to perform the horrible process of flaying the regicidal monster so skilfully that he would survive to endure farther torture and execution as provided by the law. Another person wrote to propose that the tortures used at Geneva during the height of the Calvinistic contest in that city, which were said to be the most horrible that man could inflict, should be essayed on Ravaillac. Queen Marie sent a message expressly to the parliament to communicate the proposals; both suggestions were rejected by the chambers; which, however, ordered the prisoner to be sub-

¹ Procès de Ravaillac.—Mém. de Condé.

² Ibid.

jected to the *question ordinaire et extraordinaire*, after the mode practised in France, by *la buvette et les brodequins*, which was accordingly done. On the 19th the prisoner was again brought before the commissioners; and again made solemn protest that no person was implicated in his crime: the deed, he said, was his own; and the merit of it, if any, would be alone ascribed to his holy zeal. On the 25th of May sentence was pronounced: the miserable regicide was condemned, after again enduring *peines fortes et dures*, to be taken in a tumbril to the porch of Nôtre Dame, and there, torch in hand, to ask pardon of God, the king, and the parliament for his execrable parricide. He was then to be taken to la Place de Grève, where, on a high scaffold, holding the knife with which he had stabbed the king, his hand was to be slowly consumed by fire. His body was next to be tortured with hot pincers; boiling oil, pitch, sulphur, and wax to be thrown over the wounds thus inflicted. An hour was then to elapse, during which the criminal might be exhorted to make plenary confession, under penalty of eternal perdition. His body was afterwards to be tied between two stakes, and his limbs attached to horses, and in that position he was to be dismembered: this done, his mangled limbs were to be cast into a furnace of fire, and, when con-

sumed, the ashes were to be thrown into the Seine. The house in which the criminal was born, and that in which he lived when at Angoulême, were to be razed: his father and mother to be banished the realm; and all persons bearing the accursed name of Ravail-lac were commanded, under penalty of banishment, to change their surnames.¹ This horrible sentence was literally executed, May 27th, in the presence of a vast concourse. The windows of the hôtel de Ville and the neighbouring houses were crowded by great and influential personages, who witnessed the execution. The unhappy culprit was saluted by execrations; every torture evoked a shout of applause: the priests on the scaffold were prevented from offering the accustomed prayers for his soul; and when at length, after the lapse of two hours, death terminated the dreadful sufferings of the poor fanatic, the people rushed on the scaffold, and snatched his mangled remains from the executioners, and dragged them in triumph about the streets of the capital.

¹ Procès de Ravail-lac—Mém. de Condé, t. 6. Mercure François, t. 1. De Thou, t. 15, p. 106, et seq. Journal de Henry IV., année 1610. Hist. de la Mère et du Fils, t. 1. Mezerai—Vie de Henri IV. Dupleix. Hist. de France. Olagaray, Hist. de Béarn—Vie de Henri IV. Mathieu—Hist. de la Mort déplorable de Henri IV.

The personages most interested in the suppression of the inquiry now deemed themselves comparatively safe and at ease; especially after the parliament thought fit to issue an extraordinary decree, ordering all documents connected with the late trial to be destroyed; and even those which recorded the result of the secret interrogations.¹ The High Court was moreover censured for not having arrested and confronted with the criminal various persons mentioned in his avowals—such as Guillebaut the donor of the reliquary, and his confessor, the curé of St. Severin. A graver charge, however, arose from the circumstance, that the criminal asked on the scaffold for permission to record his last wishes and deposition. The demand being granted, the notary Voisin was directed to approach the sufferer, and note down whatever he might dictate. Acting, as it is supposed, according to secret instructions, Voisin wrote so illegibly, that afterwards it was found impossible to decipher the writing—an indistinctness which he ascribed to agitation and horror at the spectacle before him. This document is said

¹ *Mém. de Sully*, liv. 27, p. 395. Also—the original account of the circumstances preceding and following the death of Henry IV.—*Economies Royales*. De Thou, t. 15, p. 107. Sully says—“Ce cri public désigne les menteurs du roi de manière à fixer tous les doutes sur ce detestable complot!” liv. 28ème.

still to be extant; but that every effort to penetrate its mysteries has failed.¹

In January of the following year, 1611, Madame de Comant was liberated from the debtors' prison in La Conciergerie, through the benefaction of some unknown personage. Feeling grief and compunction, as she said, that God had not enabled her to save the life of their glorious king, and smarting under the severities which she had undergone in prison, Madame de Comant addressed a letter to the queen-regent, in which she reiterated her charges against Epernon and others. Finding herself and her assertions altogether disregarded, this woman one day stopped queen Marguerite in the church of St. Victor, and implored audience. The queen granted the request, recognizing Comant as a person having once holden service in her household.² The latter then recounted her story; adding, that before her imprisonment she had addressed a letter to queen Marie, and signed it Henriette de Balzac; for she feared that a paper bearing her own obscure name would never reach the royal hand. Marguerite, with that sound judgment in serious matters which generally distinguished

¹ *Mercure François*, t. 1. Siri.—*Mém. Recondites*, t. 1.

² Jacqueline le Voyer, dame de Comant, had been an under-tirewoman in the service of queen Marguerite.

her, repaired instantly to the Louvre, and imparted to the regent the revelation she had just heard; and which directly charged Epernon and Madame de Verneuil, in league with the Spanish cabinet, with the foul assassination. Marie pettishly replied:—"That Comant was a wicked woman, who accused everybody; and that she did not even know whether she might not charge her also with the crime."¹ Her majesty, however, could not deny that a letter signed "Henriette de Balzac" had been laid before her some months previously, which she angrily threw into the fire unread. The matter was laid before the council, and a warrant was issued for the arrest of Jacqueline de Comant. She was first interrogated, and then sent back to the Conciergerie, being desired to prove her allegations, and to defend herself as a perjurer and defamer. De Harlay, however, declared himself the protector of la Dame de Comant until her falsehood was manifest. Resolved to sift the truth of her depositions, he is said to have been horrified at the facts eventually disclosed.²

The greatest consternation, meanwhile, pos-

¹ Mém. pour servir à l'Histoire de France, t. 11, p. 357.

² Veritable Manifeste sur la Mort de Henri le Grand, par la Demoiselle de Comant. Mercure François, année 1611, p. 14.

sessed the persons accused: the duke d'Epemon, now high in the royal favour, and domiciled in the Louvre, manifested extraordinary anxiety.¹ His interviews with Mademoiselle du Tillet, and her sister Madame de St. André, were frequent. One day he called upon de Harlay, and with the high patronizing air for which he was renowned, the duke asked "how the affair of la Comant proceeded?" "I am not your reporter, monseigneur," drily replied the venerable magistrate—"possibly, before long I may become your judge!" "As a friend, then, tell me something of the progress of the examination of that little liar," persisted Epemon. "I have no friends, monseigneur; I will render justice to you—be content, you will know all before much time elapses." Epemon hurried to the palace to complain of the rude treatment which he had received. Marie, thereupon, sent Concini to intimate her regret that M. d'Epemon had not met with the deference due to his rank and merit; and to express her hope that M. le Premier would for the future remember that the king honoured the duke as a good and favoured servant. "Tell the queen,"

¹ The exiled duc d'Aumale, in a posthumous "factum," declares that Epemon was accessory to the death of the king; and enters into details, which, if true, establish the complicity of the duke.—Extrait d'un MS. trouvé après la mort de M. le Duc d'Aumale en son cabinet, signé de sa main, et cacheté de ses armes.

replied de Harlay, "that for fifty years I have been a judge in his majesty's courts,—and for thirty years have presided as chief of the sovereign Court of appeal of this realm; but that I never before witnessed such assurance in duke, lord, peer, or burgess, accused of the crime of high treason, as shown by M. d'Epernon, in presuming to make an alleged friendly visit to his judge, booted, spurred, and wearing a sword! Fail not to report my words to the queen!"¹ The day following, Saturday, January 29, 1611, a mandate of *prise de corps* was issued by the first president against Madame de Verneuil, Mademoiselle du Tillet, Madame Hotman, and Madame de St. André. These ladies were arrested in their houses, and committed to the custody of the chevalier du Guet: all of them underwent severe interrogatories in the Bastille, especially Madame de Verneuil.² The papers of the latter were seized—and search warrants despatched to explore the private repositories of her castle of Verneuil. The terror of Henriette was extreme; in vain she implored the mercy of the queen,

¹ Mém. pour servir à l'Histoire de France, année 1610–11, t. 2.

² Ibid.—Vie de Henriette de Balzac.—Dreux du Radier, Mercière François, t. 1. Journal du Règne de Henri IV., année 1611. "Elle étoit accusée par la Comant, et ne fut décrétée que d'un assigné pour être ouïe," on the margin of the warrant.

and the intercession of the duke de Guise. Marie laughed at her terrors; and seemed from thenceforth the more willingly to sanction investigations which Epernon designated "as an affront offered to his high dignity." The examination of Madame de Verneuil lasted from one o'clock until five in the afternoon: no fact was publicly proved; but yet she continued under surveillance for some weeks afterwards in her house in Paris. Mademoiselle du Tillet escaped with a reprimand.¹ Every private resource of bribery and corruption, nevertheless, was resorted to, to suppress the pending process, and to procure the condemnation of Comant. The rank of the persons accused was so great,² that even the stern de Harlay hesitated to involve the realm, during a minority, in the troubles consequent on the arraignment of these persons for high treason. On these grounds, after a long and private interview with the regent, de Harlay believing, perhaps erroneously, that a wrong inflicted upon one individual was preferable to the ruin of many, consented to an edict vindicating the

¹ "Epernon en faisoit cas, car elle avait fort bon sens, étoit fort adroite, et fort née pour la cour. Elle étoit de toutes les intrigues, soit d'amour, soit d'autre chose." Tallemant des Réaux. *Historiette* 17, t. 1.

² "La Comant disoit que la Reine Mère étoit du complot, mais que Ravaillac ne le savoit pas."—*Ibid.* p. 187.

accused; but inflicting severe penalties upon the unfortunate Dame de Comant. The preamble of this strange decree deferred judgment "for a hundred years, as too many difficulties beset the decision of the judges." All persons accused were then liberated, excepting la Dame de Comant, "as the exigencies of the times compelled such judgment; in which the first president de Harlay concurred, having regard for the repose of the realm, and the quality of the accused; who, nevertheless, were not to hold themselves as exonerated." The decree proceeds to ordain that Etienne Sauvage valet to M. d'Entragues, and one Jacques Gaudin, prisoners in the Conciergerie, should be discharged. An interval of three months was suffered to elapse before a supplementary decree was issued: this document declared that la Marquise de Verneuil, la demoiselle du Tillet Gaudin, and Sauvage, were pure and innocent of the assassination of the king; and condemned la Dame de Comant for the crime of wicked perjury, to end her days a prisoner between "four walls, and confiscates her property; moreover, the High Court in its wisdom suppresses all records, documents, depositions, and papers connected with this trial." The unfortunate Jacqueline de Comant was conveyed to the convent of Les Filles Repenties, and placed in a grated cell, having a small inner chamber,

which had been constructed in a corner of the open courtyard of the convent. She survived this cruel treatment about three years; and died protesting with her last breath that her statements were true; and that Epernon and Madame de Verneuil were the active agents of Philip III. and his ministers in compassing the death of the king.¹

Before the year closed another witness arose to testify to the perfidy of these personages. One Captain Lagarde deposed that two years before the demise of Henri IV. he had been bribed to execute the deed by Fuentes, and Alagona a Jesuit priest and uncle of the duke of Lerma: that he had been introduced when at Naples to Ravailac, who was sent to Alagona with a letter of introduction from Epernon, as a person likely to execute their bidding. Lagarde stated that he pretended compliance, the better to ventilate the plot; and that he afterwards escaped and presenting himself at Fontainebleau, revealed to the king and to Villeroy the details of the conspiracy.

¹ *Mercuré Français*, t. 1. *Mém. pour servir*, etc., p. 361, et seq. "Faute de preuves, et pour assoupir une affaire qui n'étoit pas bonne à ébruiter, la Comant fut condamnée à mourir entre quatre murailles, etc.: elle fut mise aux Filles Repenties, ou on lui fit une petite logette grillée dans la cour."—*Tallemant des Réaux*, *Hist.* 17, t. 1.

The king thanked him ; and said “that he feared no enemies, but that he would so crush his foes that they should be powerless to harm him ; for that he whom God protects, is protected.” Lagarde added that the king recommended him to take service in Poland for an interval : he obeyed ; but hearing of the demise of that great monarch, he returned to France to help to convict his murderers. The walls of the Conciergerie soon silenced Lagarde : he remained a prisoner there during the minority of the young king Louis XIII, who restored him to liberty, and eventually settled upon him a pension of 600 livres ; which act of grace seems to testify that the king believed his statements—or at least did not absolutely reject them as fabulous.¹

In foreign realms the demise of Henri Quatre was sincerely mourned. The world, it was felt, had lost a master-spirit—a sovereign of enlightened mind, a monarch fitted to wield the resources and to guide the destinies of a mighty realm. Henry’s friend king James of England was informed of the fatal event when hunting in Windsor Forest. The king re-

¹ Manifeste de Pierre Dujardin, Sieur de la Garde, prisonnier en la Conciergerie de Paris.—Archives Curieuses sur l’Histoire de France, t. 15, 1 series. La Garde states that Hébert, secretary of the late duke de Biron, et La Bruyère, a famous ex-leaguer, and others, were active agents of the foul plot.

turned to the castle, manifesting extreme emotion. James then addressed a missive to his privy-council, in which he confessed that words were too feeble to express his sorrow for the catastrophe; "light griefs," wrote his majesty, "find vent in words: a calamity like the present is dumb." James ordered a general mourning throughout his realm for his late beloved brother and ally king Henry, of glorious memory. The old prepossessions of James against the Jesuits returned in full force: edicts were instantly issued commanding all priests of the order to vacate the realm; and the king was constantly heard to deplore, in quaint language, the unfortunate infatuation for the oily-tongued priest Cotton, which had enslaved his brother of France; and to which his majesty ascribed the restoration of the order, and the consequent catastrophe.¹ In Rome grief prevailed for the death of Henry. Pope Paul spent a vigil in making intercession for the repose of his soul; and his holiness attended in person the funeral solemnities performed in the church of St Louis; and applauded the words of the orator Seguier, in which the preacher termed the deceased king "the Protector of the peace of Europe, the ornament of the Catholic Church, the arbiter between Christian princes, and

¹ Mathieu—*Hist. de la Mort de Henri IV.*, p. 83.

the glory and honour of the world!" "Alas! Christendom has lost the glory and pearl of kings!" exclaimed the archduchess infanta when the news was communicated to her. King Philip was asleep in his palace of el Escorial when the despatch reached his ministers, containing details of the sanguinary deed. "What!" exclaimed his Catholic majesty, suddenly roused from his slumber, "do you come to announce the sad tidings that the king of France has declared war against this realm?" "Sire, the said king will never do you harm: he is dead!" replied the marquis de Velada. When apprized of the circumstances of Henri's death, Philip is reported to have exclaimed—"The greatest captain of the age is no more! God be thanked that his murderer is captured, so that the truth of this foul deed may be ascertained!"¹

The prince de Condé received notice of the event at Milan; where Fuentes still surrounded him with his oppressive courtesies, the true import of which Condé divined. "The beloved guest soon wearied of a hospitality which surrounded him with domestic spies; and which, when abroad in his coach or on horseback, honoured him by a royal escort—in other words, a detachment of

¹ Ibid.

guards.” The negotiation of the abbé d’Aumale, a friend of Condé, had failed to induce the prince to make submission to his offended sovereign; or to transfer his place of abode¹ from Milan to Rome, where the pope promised him protection and intercession. Condé, at length worn out by apprehension and incertitude, had resolved to make terms with Spain. About the middle of April he had, therefore, empowered his faithful Rochefort to journey to Madrid, and negotiate a treaty which might release him from his prison at Milan; and transfer the guardianship of Madame de Condé from the infanta to the queen of Spain. Condé wrote to his Catholic majesty a direct offer of his services and his allegiance; and, moreover, gave Rochefort a list of articles which were to be considered as the groundwork of the treaty which he desired to conclude.² Rochefort had scarcely sailed from Genoa when the intelligence of the demise of the king was communicated. Condé despatched a messenger to arrest the departure of his chamberlain; or to follow him to

¹ Récit de l’Abbé d’Aumale.—Mém. de ce que j’ai traité avec M. le P. de Condé à Milan.—MS. Bibl. Imp. F. S. Germ. fr., vol. 1019.

² Lettre de M. de Condé au Roy Catholique en lui envoyant M. de Rochefort. MS. Bibl. Imp. Bouhier, 87. Instructions pour le S. de Rochefort—mon Chambellan ordinaire.—Ibid. MS.

Madrid, in the event of Rochefort having embarked, with a written veto against the unfolding of the propositions committed to him. Condé then addressed letters to the queen-regent, to his mother, and Montmorency, and to the duchesse d'Angoulême. To queen Marie he made professions of devotion and sympathy; and craved permission to return, to serve her and her august son, Louis XIII.¹ To Montmorency, Condé promised friendship and forgetfulness of past quarrels: and, moreover, he engaged to forgive his wife her late proceedings, and to live with her in honour and concord. His letter to Madame Diane contained the same professions and engagements.² Marie, whose interest it then was to be on cordial terms with the prince, consented to his recall; and honoured M. de Condé, when he arrived in Paris, with a gracious reception. M. de Soissons,³ also, hastened to Paris on the contingency, and felt his petty pride immeasurably solaced by being able to browbeat Sully with impunity; and by his nomination, in virtue of his office as grand-master, to pre-

¹ Mém. de la retraite de M. le Prince avec Madame sa femme hors du Royaume de France.—MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bouhier, vol. 87.

² Lettre de M. de Condé à M. Diane de France, duchesse d'Angoulême, MS. Bibl. Im. F. St. Germ. f.—1019.

³ Soissons returned to court May 17th.

side at the funeral solemnities of the interment of the late king at St. Denis.

This ceremonial took place on the 29th of June, 1610, and the two following days. The pageant was interrupted by unseemly altercations, as to the proper place to be occupied in the procession by the High Court; the members of which, according to precedent, marched wearing their scarlet gowns. The Parliament met on the preceding day, and after due consultation, decided that the place of the members was to march surrounding the litter upon which the waxen effigy of the king reposed—" *L'image de la Justice vivante de sa majesté*," as the court expressed it; while the bishop of Paris, and the other prelates and clergy preceded the car, upon which the coffin was borne, containing the mortal remains of the late king, which it was the duty of M. de Paris to commit to the grave. Epernon, however, induced the regent to ordain that the most honourable place in the procession—to wit, the vicinity of the royal effigy—should be given to the bishops.¹ The royal orders were communicated to the count de Soissons, who received the command with delight, as an op-

¹ "Le duc d'Epernon obséda la reine, et l'engagea à donner le dessous au parlement dans cette affaire, en exagérant le respect dû à la dignité épiscopale. La reine qui était facile, appuya l'opiniâtreté des évêques, sans entendre le parlement."—De Thou, t. 15, p. 115.

portunity for the display of his authority; and as a mode likely to satiate the grudge he then bore towards all the members of the High Court, for their presumption in having intrusted supreme power to the queen during his absence. The wise forbearance of de Harlay first president, averted a contest when the *cortége* was about to set out; and also prevented that the solemn interment of one of the best kings who ever sat on the French throne, should be rendered memorable by the withdrawal from the procession of the members of the highest Court of the realm.¹ In consequence of this deviation from the accustomed ceremonial, when the corpse arrived at St. Denis, there was no prelate to answer the accustomed summons; or to deliver the royal remains to the abbot and his monks.² The bishop of Paris, whose duty it was to perform this office, had just quitted the gates of Paris, heading the procession of prelates in attendance around the litter conveying the effigy of the deceased king. M. de Vitry captain of the guards, therefore stepped forwards and performed the service; as the whole procession, which was of immense length, was arrested by this forgotten obstacle. The coffin was then carried into the church

¹ De Thou—*ibid.*

² “L’Evêque devoit attester que le défunt avoit vécu dans la religion Chretienne.”—*Ibid.*

and placed in a *chapelle ardente*; whilst the solemnities of the interment of Henry III., Henry's predecessor, were first proceeded with.

The body of Henry III. had lain in the abbey church of St. Cornouaille de Compiègne,¹ during the reign of Henri Quatre. The king had, however, intended to place the body of his predecessor, who likewise fell a victim to the knife of an assassin, in the royal vault at St. Denis. This pious office was proposed to queen Marie by the duke d'Épernon, who repaired to Compiègne and superintended the removal of the body of his first patron, and most indulgent master, to St. Denis. When this ceremony was concluded, the church was lighted with tapers, and services were chanted throughout the night for the repose of the soul of the late king by the cardinal de Joyeuse, and by other prelates. On the morrow, July 1st, the last august ceremony connected with the name of Henri Quatre was performed. The bishop of Angers preached the funeral sermon; the cardinal de Joyeuse, attired in pontifical vestments, officiated at the altar; and the

¹ See Life of Henry III., king of France and Poland, vol. 3, bk. 6. The body of Catharine de Medici was likewise conveyed from the vaults of St. Sauveur de Blois to St. Denis. The ceremonial was performed with indecent haste. The persons employed to lift the coffin of Henry III. from the bier into the cathedral dropped it in the choir, when the coffin broke asunder.

bishop of Paris performed the service at the vault. When all was concluded, the count de St. Paul, who acted as deputy of the count de Soissons grand-master of the household,¹ broke his wand of office, and cast the fragments on to the coffin as it slowly descended into the tomb. A pause ensued, broken by the sobs of the spectators. The heralds then waved their flags, while the king-at-arms proclaimed the titles of the deceased monarch, and exclaimed three times, "The King is dead—pray for his soul!" All persons present then kneeled, and silence prevailed for the space of five minutes. "Vive le Roy! Vive Louis XIII., by the grace of God King of France and Navarre, the very Christian King, our sovereign lord, and gracious master, to whom may God grant a long and happy life!" "Trumpets then sounded, and drums and kettledrums beat, and every one arose with sad countenance and tearful eye!" records a chronicler and eye-witness—"the organs pealed, and all departed from the church; and the coffin of the king was carried down into the vault, by the subterranean passages, on the shoulders of the gentlemen of his chambers, "and there reverently deposited; his soul committed to the keeping of the Most High, his fame and

¹ The count de Soissons rode in the procession in his double capacity of prince of the blood and one of the mourners. He supported his elder brother, the prince de Conty.

glorious renown the heritage of France and of his own posterity!"¹

Henry IV. died May 14, 1610, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, after a reign of little more than twenty years of almost unbroken public prosperity. By his second marriage with Marie de Medici he left three sons and three daughters: the King Louis XIII.; a son, who, from some unknown cause, received no baptismal name, but was created duke of Orleans—this prince died in 1611. The third son of the royal pair received the name of Jean Baptiste Gaston; and during the life of his second brother he bore the title of due d'Anjou, but afterwards assumed that of due d'Orleans. Madame Royale espoused Philip IV., king of Spain; Madame Christine became the consort of Victor Amadeus, duke of Savoy; and Henry's youngest daughter, Henriette Marie, espoused Charles I. king of Great Britain.

The king left many illegitimate children. By Gabrielle d'Estrées duchesse de Beaufort, he had César duc de Vendôme, who married Francoise de Lorraine, heiress of Mercœur; Alexandre François, Chevalier de Vendôme; and Catherine Henriette, who espoused Charles duc d'Elbeuf.

By madame de Verneuil Henry's children

¹ Funerailles de Henri IV. *Mercure François*, t. 1er. De Thou, vol. 15, p. 115, et seq. Mathieu. Dupleix. Prefixe.

were Henri duke de Verneuil, bishop of Metz, which ecclesiastical dignity the young prince eventually relinquished; and one daughter Gabrielle, who married Bernard, duke d'Epernon.

After the demise of the king, the duke de Guise, whether alienated by the revelations which ensued, or fascinated by the charms and the wealth of the widowed duchess de Montpensier, made suit to the queen to obtain the hand of the latter, being totally oblivious of any prior engagements he might have contracted with Henriette de Balzac. Madame de Verneuil, on the 15th of September, 1610, appealed to the count de Soissons; and deposited in his hands a document, said to be a contract, in which Guise promised her marriage. M. de Soissons, having views of his own—tending to annul the contract which bound the youthful daughter of the duchess de Montpensier to the infant duc d'Orleans, in order to affiance the young heiress to his own son—highly disapproved of the marriage of the duchess¹ with M. de Guise. He, therefore, promised Ma-

¹ Madame de Montpensier was heiress of Joyeuse. M. de Soissons feared that she might alienate a portion of her wealth in favour of children born during any second marriage. The young Marie de Montpensier nevertheless, inherited sixty millions from her father, and eventually espoused her affianced Gaston, duke of Orleans.

dame de Verneuil his protection under certain conditions; and undertook to compel the duke to fulfil his promise. The queen, however, forgetting in the prosperity of power, any anterior promise she might have made to la Marquise, peremptorily refused to permit the union of the latter with Guise; and through the president Jeamin, contrived to intimidate Henriette so effectually as to compel her to withdraw all pretensions to so illustrious an alliance.¹ Madame de Verneuil, after this indignity, retired from a court where her presence was unwelcome; and thus prudently refrained from jeopardising the wealth which she had accumulated from the generosity of Henri Quatre. She thenceforth lived chiefly at Verneuil: her latter days were spent in indolent luxury; but to the last, her sprightly and racy wit charmed. Her *embonpoint* at length became excessive. "During the last years of her life, Madame de Verneuil indulged her appetite for eating without restraint. She thought of nothing but ragoûts; and at length grew so fat, that she avoided the least exertion, and seldom left her couch,"² is the record given by a chronicler of note, of the latter days of the famous and lovely Henriette de Balzac. Madame de Verneuil

¹ Vie d'Henriette de Balzac.—Dreux du Radier.—Hist de la Mère et du Fils.

² Tallemant des Réaux, Hist. 1er.

died suddenly at her château de Verneuil on the 9th February, 1633, at the age of fifty-four years.

By Madame de Moret king Henry had one son, Antoine, legitimated in 1608.¹ The two daughters of the king by Mademoiselle des Essarts became abbesses of their respective nunneries, which were the richest and most influential of the realm,—Jeanne de Bourbon became abbess of Fontevraud; and her sister Marie Henriette, abbess of Chelles. These two royal ladies were women of great genius and learning; and ruled their houses with a vigorous ability, which has earned for them notable renown in ecclesiastical annals. They both survived to extreme old age; and both bore a striking personal resemblance to their royal father.

Marguerite de Valois, Henry's first and divorced wife, survived until the year 1615; and died in Paris at her hôtel du Faubourg St. Germain. Marguerite sincerely mourned the demise of King Henry; and, on the anniversary of his assassination, she caused services to be performed in Nôtre Dame, and in other churches of the capital, which she devoutly attended.

¹ Antoine count de Moret, was killed at the combat of Castelmaudary, so fatal to the valiant due de Montmorency; who was sacrificed, like all the other friends and adherents of the duke of Orleans, to the selfish and timorous disposition of that prince.

Henry IV. assumed for his device a sun, with the motto—" *Stare super vias antiquas.*" He also bore the royal motto of France—" *Lilia non laborant neque nent.*" but the characteristic motto was most favoured by him:—"A CŒUR VAILLANT RIEN D'IMPOSSIBLE!"

THE END.

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